THE THEOPHANY

Valentina Laird and Samantha Rinne Hooker

The Theophany
Valentina Laird and Samantha Rinne Hooker

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NoDerivatives 2.5

© 2026 Samantha Rinne Hooker. All rights reserved.

Binding: Paperback

ISBN: 9798193318712
Imprint: Independently published

Published by Samantha Rinne Hooker
Edited by Samantha Rinne Hooker
Assisted by Valentina Laird
Illustrated by Valentina Laird and Samantha Rinne Hooker

Published in the United States

Table of Contents

ORIGIN....6
The Creation And Fall....6
Chosen People....21
Liberation....51
MYTHS....63
Sand Sculptures....63
Before Mankind....64
Many Iterations....65
The Stone....65
The Fall of Animals....67
The Tale of the Fox....67
Mystery of the Ancient Kingdom....69
The Seal and the Secret....69
Accusation of the Sinner....70
The Erasure of Er....72
The Horse Ran Away....73
Quest For Immortality....74
Unfaithful Sailor....75
THE LAW....76
PROPHECIES OF MESSIAH....88
JUDGES....94
RUTH....99
HISTORIES....100
Joshua....100
Samuel....116
David....143
Solomon....164
Kings....175
PATIENCE OF JOB....194
ECCLESIASTES....205
JONAH....205
HOSEA....207
AMOS....208
ISAIAH....211
JEREMIAH....226
DANIEL....236
THE RETURN TO ISRAEL....240
EZEKIEL....244
ZECHARIAH....246
SELECTION OF PSALMS....248
LADY WISDOM....262
SONG OF SONGS....265
THE YEARS OF SILENCE....267
GOSPEL OF DISCIPLES....269
GOSPEL OF THE BELOVED....316
LEGENDS....339
Ancient Earth....339
Lost History....339
Epilogue to Liberation....340
The South Pole....342
Magi....343
The Childhood of a Messiah....346
The Afterlife of Christ....348
The Fate of Judas....352
The Stranger....353
Before The Lord....354
His Eye is on the Sparrow....354
Waitress....355

Tales of the Abyss....356
The Story of Christmas....358
ACTS OF THE APOSTLES....358
THE MISSION OF MAGDALENE....381
LETTERS....385
Romans....385
Corinthians....389
Galatians....392
Colossians....393
Manumission of Onesimus....393
Other Letters....394
ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION....398
The Savior and the Executioner....398
Omens of Disaster....399
The Stoic Opposition....402
The Fall of the Temple....403
Messiahs and Saints....405
From Sea To Shining Sea....408
The Eastern Gate....410
17TH TAMMUZ....411
THE DARKNESS AND THE LIGHT....414
KYRIA....419
THEOPHANY....424

EDITOR'S NOTE

This is not official Christian canon, and you are free to make your own decisions about the text, as I believe in religious interpretation. Regarding the book, my motive for writing this book was as follows. Watching elections, COVID, and other crises, I heard over and over how this or that was going to be the end of the world. Then I read online about how Martin Luther, among others, rejected Revelation as unbiblical. I also read *The Apocalypse Deception* by Fred Harding, and became increasingly convinced that while the Gospel is biblical, some things might not have been verified for authenticity. While I wouldn't go like the Mormons who rejected other Christians entirely, I decided that I personally had my own thoughts. If I wasn't sure about a text, I changed it or removed it. And so, I tried to scrub references to things like eternal judgement for temporal sins, and so on. Yes, GOD does get angry, happy, or sad. But I wanted the idea that GOD doesn't totally destroy everything forever and doesn't get kicks on torturing people. I also scrubbed some of the patriarchal Jewishness from the text. For instance, what was originally Proverbs became Lady Wisdom, as it seemed to me that the text was about Wisdom, a female form of GOD, being swept aside in favor of moral lessons. To be fair, GOD is definitely contrasted with Ishtar, so there is sense to trying to sweep this under the rug. But regardless of the truth or falsehood of stuff like Ishtar, GOD is nothing more or less than the real Creator of all that is. This means that at the heart of things, GOD loves all people, and is in pain because he wants to see all his children thrive. I also refused to call GOD as Yahweh, because this was also the name of a Canaanite deity. I also strongly dislike the teaching that GOD's blessings are primarily centered around the treasures of the physical world, and that GOD likes idols of gold or silver.

When I started *The Theophany*, I've decided to take things a step further than just little edits though. Readers of the Bible who eventually defect to atheism always tell me the same thing, "The Bible is a book of laws and condemnations." I wanted to explain the purpose of the law. The real purpose of the Bible is to focus on stories of encounters with GOD, on people and relationships, not laws. This version assumes the reader is familiar with the original Bible, as it is cut and edited and abridged to be a summary or overview. I edited the Psalms to be less about judgement and more about defense. I also reworked the original text, as there were an inordinate number of things that I found to be a nuisance, so I removed filler words, archaic words or language of a time of servants, quotes within quotes within quotes, quotes spanning several chapters, and sections where you could not tell the speaker. I also had trouble with certain prophetic sections, particularly Isaiah. I wanted the text to be in narrative style, but some was disembodied commands or prayers. I have also decided to rename some things. The Angel of the LORD became simply the LORD. In some cases, I also used my own terms like *Ruach ha Kodesh* (Spirit of GOD or Holy Spirit). Also, after a certain point in what was called the New Testament, LORD becomes DEAREST. This is in reference to the passage in Hosea, where they talk about how "You will no longer call me LORD but DEAREST."

I also reorganized sections, since there was a lot of doubling back and repeating sections. I also embellished sections from television adaptations of the Bible, which aren't in the original text. For example, I added stories of the times of the Flood, characters from films, and the like. I added the Infancy Gospel, with my own take. I even added several just-so stories to explain characteristics of people or things. What? This is my Bible, so I'll add in what I want. In response to those who say that I am committing some grave sin by altering the text, I can only say in response that the Word of GOD is JESUS. The Bible is not the Word, but a dictionary to translate it for us.

As a side note, I realized that by changing the ending of the Bible, I effectively made it a story structure called **Kishōtenketsu**, a four act story based on change rather than conflict. So I divided it that way. Oh, and the copies are not necessarily in sync with each other, because I update a lot.

The Beginning
ORIGIN
THE CREATION AND FALL

CHAPTER 1

GOD is eternal, having no beginning nor end. GOD was not created by anything else, yet through GOD all things exist, from the atoms to the stars. And for an eternity, GOD sat alone surrounded by lifeless matter, dark formless things that were once part of GOD's own body.[1] This darkness was the miasma of Abyss, and represented the depth of isolation.[2] At last, the LORD said, "It is not good for us to be alone. We will make all things to keep us company." For GOD is Love, and Love feels the pain of separation deeply. And thus, the timeless moment became the moment of creation.

In the moment of creation, GOD created Heaven and Earth. Earth was formless entropy, and darkness

was on the surface of the Abyss. And GOD's Spirit was walking untouched over the surface of utter chaos. And GOD said, "Let there be Light," and there was Light.[3] And the Light energized a formless miasma into all matter.[4] For before the Light was, GOD was surrounded by the gloomy stagnation of isolation, but GOD made a space that divided the darkness. And GOD saw that the Light was good, for it banished GOD's loneliness. And GOD stirred the stagnant chaos around.[5] And GOD separated the Light into light and darkness. And GOD called light "day", and darkness they[6] called "night". This

---

[1] Effectively, I'm comparing pre-existent primordial matter to excrement. I'm also saying that this sludge wasn't "created" but rather always was, that the complexity of matter is a subset of the self-created complexity of GOD. All matter was put together, from subatomic particles all the way up, but it needed energy to be other than lifeless building blocks.

[2] The Abyss is a place of chaotic matter, a mix of spiritual things and undefined matter. It represents both unguided matter and a sort of spirit world like the Egyptian Du'at. Spirits and demons reside in this place, as we later find out from the demons that JESUS encounters in Legion. That he begs not to return means that it appears to be a distinct place from Sheol, so either it is unpleasant, or souls have a different fate from the normal living souls that we experience in the world. Maybe they are immortal but not truly alive?

[3] The Taoist myth describes the state of matter before everything is created as *wu chi*, that is a sort of undifferentiated matter. That is, the act of creation is the consolidation of raw materials into a united mass, followed by separation. We see this motif play out throughout the creation, separating light and darkness, water and sky, water and ground, nonliving and living, male and female, and finally "good" and "evil." Creation is the act of separation of things that are too muddled.

[4] Although GOD could create all matter, effectively the problem isn't that there is no matter, but that it is in a state of entropy. No, Einstein, energy doesn't convert into matter. Energy is used to change matter through chemical reactions. Not one grain of energy can solidify into matter, it can only do work. Likewise, if you burn a log, energy is released, not matter converted into energy. Light being a form of productive energy, powers all the rest of creation.

[5] This is a reference to Shinto myth. My idea is that GOD isn't just a tribal deity for the Jewish people, but for all people of the Earth.

[6] GOD's gender is subjective to what he or she deals with. GOD therefore is represented here as a singular they, much like a nonbinary person.

light shone above as the glory of GOD. There was evening and there was morning, the first day.[7]
And GOD said, "Let there be an expanse in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters." And it was so. And GOD made the expanse, and stirred the waters which were under the expanse all the way down to cover over the Abyss, and the waters which were above the expanse made up the firmament. And GOD called the expanse "sky". And GOD saw that it was good. And the firmament diminished the lights above for day and the darkness for night, for they were intense. There was evening and there was morning, a second day.
And GOD said, "Let the waters under the sky be gathered together, and let the dry land appear." And it was so. And the waters under the sky gathered together, and the dry land appeared. And GOD called the dry mass "land", and the waters that were above the Abyss were called "seas". And GOD saw that it was good.[8] And the firmament and the boundaries under the water and land were made to heal themselves from harm.[9] And GOD said, "Let Earth produce vegetation, plants yielding seed after its kind, and fruit trees bearing fruit with seed in it after its kind, on Earth." And it was so. And Earth brought forth vegetation, plants yielding seed after its kind, and fruit trees bearing fruit with seed in it after its kind, on Earth. And GOD saw that it was good. There was evening and there was morning, a third day.
And GOD said, "Let there be lights in the expanse of the sky for the illumination of the day, to give directional light on Earth, and to watch[10] over the day and the night, and to separate between the day and the night. And let them be for signs, for seasons, for days, and for years. And let them be for lights in the expanse of the sky to give light on Earth." And it was so. And GOD made the two great lights: the greater light to rule over the day, and the lesser light to govern the night. And he called these "sun" and "moon" and placed them in subordination to the sky.[11] The sun was bright enough that it provided light and heat at any distance that it could be seen, but the moon was cooling and slowly brightened or dimmed over the course of a month. And GOD made also the stars in the sky, to watch humanity to a lesser extent when night was at its darkest. And GOD set them in the expanse of the sky to shine above all who lived on Earth, to separate the light from the darkness. And GOD set a line between the sky and the land called it "horizon" and set the sun and moon to rise and to set upon the horizon, and for view to converge on the horizon. And GOD set a great wheel in the sky, and set the stars on course with it, and named the center of this the "pole."[12] And the land in the center was named Atland (**אטלנטיס**)[13], and in its center was a great tree, a tree that GOD planted, which supported the connection of life to the divine, and was directly beneath the star above the pole. And GOD saw that it was good. There was evening and there was morning, a fourth day.
And GOD said, "Let the waters swarm with swarms of living creatures, and let flying creatures fly above Earth in the open expanse of the sky." And it was so. And GOD painted[14] the great sea creatures

---

[7] I was reading a flat Earth article about how there is an overhead light that is distinct from the directional light of the sun. This light existed before the sun.
[8] The waters can only be gathered together in such a way in a flat domed Earth. Some may scoff and say that we would fall off such a world. But this is based on misunderstanding. In a round Earth, all water in the Earth would drain to its lowest point, because water does not cling to a convex object. The Earth, thus, is a basin that holds water, and by north we mean towards its center, south as towards its edge, while east and west mean clockwise and counterclockwise. The Earth appears "round" because of a misunderstanding of what east and west means.
[9] If you were to dig far enough, lava would seal the indentations that the drill made. Similarly, I watched a video where they talked about a wall made of frozen oxygen that kept repairing itself. The Earth is like a living thing, it can be wounded, but it is made to heal itself.
[10] To "watch" as in the sun (Uriel), the moon (Sariel), and the stars are all watchers, or angels.
[11] The sun, moon, and stars are originally worshiped as gods, but here they are lights placed in subordination to the sky itself.
[12] Note there is no mention of planets. Planets (πλανωμένοι ἀστέρες) are wandering stars and not three-dimensional masses of rock or gas. The moon itself is mentioned as a "light" and not a solid mass that reflects light. The round Earth theory has lied to people for years. The stars, sun, and moon shine light on the Earth. Also note that there are day and night before there is a created sun and moon, these are *not* necessary for day or night. The sun does not actually descend when it sets, it is always overhead, and perspective makes it appear to rise and fall. In other words, at the same altitude, as the sun moves past, it will go up to 90 degrees and back down until it disappears from view.
[13] The Hebrew text reads "Atlantis." Atland is because I was watching an Eric Dubay video about how ancient cultures have a similar word for Atlantis, no matter what their language. Atland, that is land *at* the center.
[14] GOD's creation is like a mixed medium artwork. There are some aspects of photography, some sand sculpture, some painting. I imagine the animals of the air as watercolor, and the animals of the sea as an oil-based paint. I imagine it this way because creation involves creativity, and logic holds things together.

and every living creature that flies along the sky, and they were so. And the waters swarmed with each of them, after its kind, and every winged flying creature after its kind. And GOD saw that it was good. And GOD blessed them, saying, "Be fruitful, and multiply, and fill the waters in the seas, and let the flying creatures multiply on Earth." There was evening and there was morning, a fifth day.
And GOD said, "Let Earth bring forth living creatures after its kind: tame animals, and crawling creatures, and wild animals of the land after its kind." And it was so. And GOD used sand to sculpt the wild animals of the land after its kind, and the tame animals after its kind, and everything that crawls on the ground after its kind. And GOD saw that it was good. And GOD said, "Let us make a human in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the flying creatures of the sky, and over the tame animals, and over all the wild animals of the land, and over every creature that crawls on Earth." And it was so. And GOD breathed a human in their own image, a spirit to rule over the physical life. In GOD'S image they were created, male *and* female. And this human was as yet a spirit without a body. And GOD blessed them, saying, "Replenish the Earth, have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the flying creatures of the sky, and over all the tame and wild animals of the land, and over all the creatures that crawl on Earth." And GOD said, "I have given you every plant yielding seed, which is on the surface of all Earth, and every tree, which bears fruit yielding seed. It will be your food. And to every wild animal of Earth, and to every tame animal of Earth, and to every flying creature of the sky, and to every creature that crawls on Earth, in which there is life, I have given every green plant for food." And GOD saw everything that they had made, and it was very good. There was evening and there was morning, a sixth day.

CHAPTER 2

Thus Heaven and Earth were finished, and all their vast array. And on the sixth day GOD finished their works which they had made; and they rested on the seventh day from all their works which they had made. So GOD blessed the seventh day, and made it holy, because they rested on it from all their works which GOD had created and made. And so it is that all time is divided into six cycles of GOD's work, and a seventh cycle where GOD rests.[15]
And this is the story of the origin of mankind. Now no bush of the field was yet in the land, and no plant of the field had yet sprouted; for GOD had not caused it to rain on the land, and there were no people to cultivate the ground, but springs came up from Earth and watered the whole surface of the ground. And GOD wanted to make a man, for he was to be made in the image of GOD. And yet, a peculiar problem presented itself, as GOD had no idea how to make man like himself but yet different. Now the human that had been created on the sixth day into the human was a spirit, and GOD fashioned for it a Soul. Now this Soul was one of infinite portions of the *Ruach ha Kodesh*.[16] So GOD said, "Go forth, and occupy a vessel." And the spirits chose for themselves vessels of fire or sand or wind or water. Some even tried to occupy the vessels of animals. And GOD had hopes that what he created would be able to love him. These *djinn* spirits as they were called were too emotionally unstable, and were thus unable to love and care for GOD or his creation. So GOD was disappointed, for they were not in GOD's image, although their Soul was. But GOD decided to give them rulership over the Abyss. And these would become those named gods by later humans. But at this time there were no humans in the land.
GOD also made angels from the Light itself, and they were watchers over the creation and sent messages. And they were in GOD's image, and yet followed GOD's will. But because they followed GOD's will, GOD worried whether they might ever have will of their own. At this time, there were no humans in the land.
So after this, GOD chose eight among the angels, and made for them bodies out of solid vessels of stone, in hopes they would learn love. But these Annunaki with hearts of stone and bodies of the

[15] My theory is that even days are divided into seven units. A day, then is not in fact twenty-four hours, but *twenty-eight* hours, one of which is eternal time, and the rest of which is temporal time. The sun that is always brightly lit during the day recharges between time, because it violates the laws of thermodynamics to have a non-recharging perpetual exothermic energy source, while the moon takes "power naps" throughout the day while moving at a slow and steady pace. The moon slowly charges itself then de-charges to create phases (the phases are not the sun's light but its own light). GOD has created two lights as perpetual energy. Every day is a new day of creation, where GOD effectively recreates and updates the Earth based on changes.
[16] The "Spirit of GOD" or Holy Spirit.

same could not love GOD, and they were not in GOD's image, although their Soul was. They were hardened to suffering and greatly prone to boredom,[17] so GOD instructed them, "Make humans for yourselves," because at this time there were no humans in the land. And the seven indeed made the first humans out of common clay, mixing in some of their own blood with water and mud. And these angels which were once watchers became as wandering stars. [18] And these wandering stars deviated from the course that the LORD had set for them, and followed their own path.

Now, these humans created by the Annunaki were originally not created for higher things like art or culture. They were made as slaves to mine precious metal. For the humans saw gold and silver as attractive objects, while to the seven they were tools of control, and control of others entertained them. And the seven Annunaki ruled humanity in the lands of the unrighteous, and they put them to hard labor. Even so, they understood that GOD loved them. The time the Annunaki ruled was so harsh and terrible that it was said in Sumerian history that they ruled 241,000 years.[19] And while ages after this point were called the ages of gods, this time was called the age of government. Those who oppose GOD will always seek strong governments, for they desire to put chains on others, and long for such days. But you should know about these days, so that you understand they are nothing to long for. For these times were characterized by poverty, destruction, and tyranny.

And GOD decided to free these humans, by having a human of his own choosing born among them. This man had no name, but was called The Shepherd.[20] And he gave these humans reason, and they defied their masters. And thus a legend was born that a Savior would come to free mankind from their oppressors. And this caused the First Secret War (for it was fought outside of recorded history), a war of heroes of might and magic, and humanity was nearly wiped out as a result. In Elengubu of Asia Minor, an underground city was built, so that mankind might survive.[21] And while trying simply to exist, most history was lost.

So around the last two thousand years of the rule of the Annunaki, GOD resolved to choose another human to lead humanity, and set them aside. And GOD formed a human by choosing among the dust of the ground,[22] and breathed into their nostrils the breath of life, and the human became a living being. And the human was called Adam, for they were formed from the dust. And GOD placed the spirit of humanity that had been created in GOD's image[23] on the sixth day into the dust, and it occupied the vessel. And GOD said, "Here at last is a spirit after my own spirit! Let this one be free from those who would enslave him."[24] And all of this was done on a large stretch of elevated plateau that the LORD designated as a working space. And the flattest part of this mountain became what is now Temple Mount, while the remainder is what is called Sinai, and is the highest mountain, the one that a person can see GOD. This is not to be confused with what people today call Sinai. The true Sinai cannot be found easily. And this land was part of Atland, far above the reach of the Annunaki. And GOD planted a garden called Eden, and GOD chose this human above all others to put in Eden they had formed. So it was that while other humans existed, this human was chosen among chosen, chosen among dust to become human and chosen among humans created. And the LORD blessed and kept this human. The LORD allowed their countenance to show upon them, and gave them peace. And out of the ground GOD made every tree to grow that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food, and the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil was in the center. And this tree was made in the image of

---

[17] This is the psychology of a psychopath. Flattened empathy, inability to feel remorse, and extreme boredom.

[18] The origin of planets as fallen angels. This is based on text like the Book of Enoch. There are eight planets outside Earth, or eight archangels that rebelled. Each of these later gave man "gifts."

[19] This is from a Youtube video "241,000 Years of Rule: The Truth About the Sumerian Kings They Tried to Hide." Basically the claim is that an old Sumerian tablet has some strange legends just prior to the Great Flood. I edited this a bit until I managed to work it into a (somewhat) coherent history.

[20] This is basically a pre-JESUS version of JESUS.

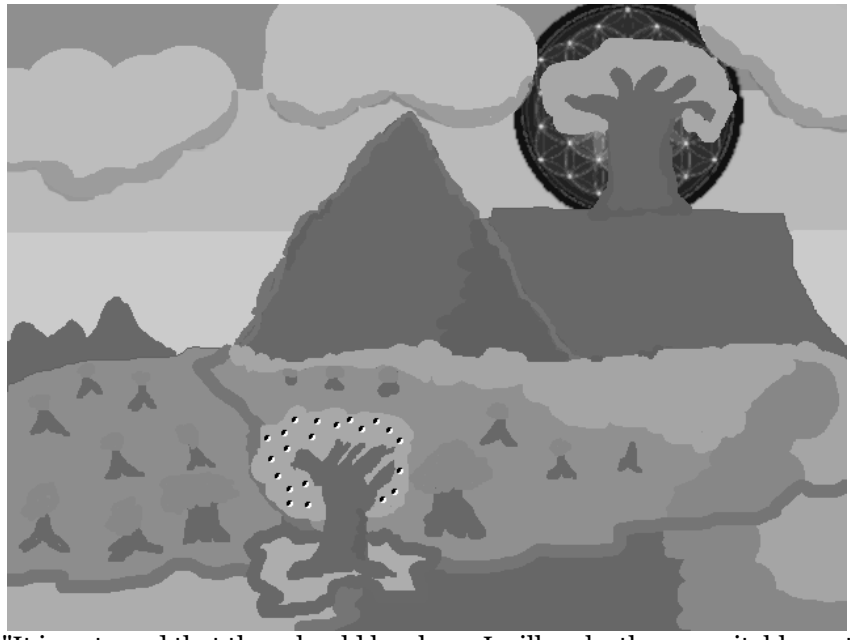
[21] Elengubu (now called Derinkuyu), it had all the traits of a bomb shelter, including a way to seal it, a depth of eighteen stories, ventilation shafts, fresh water, and enough space for twenty thousand people to hide for awhile. Whether nukes or the poison of high levels of magical radiation, this was up to the task.

[22] Human not only confirms the gender-free nature of things now, but the word human basically is similar root to dirt (humus).

[23] This image thing is important because it establishes contrast between the man in the Atrahasis narrative that is made by the Annunaki as a slave, and a new man who is free to make choices. The image of GOD is to say that they are like kings, having sovereign authority over their lives. The top of the head is even called the *crown* chakra.

[24] This line is based on what Adam says when meeting Eve.

GOD's heart, discerning good and evil. And it was attractive, particularly good for food, and it would give the human the ability to weigh good and evil in all things. Oh, and the Tree of Life was also there, I guess. But it wasn't in the center but off to the west with a large mountain in the way, and it wasn't very attractive, and it wasn't very good for food. And GOD considered making it grow taller.
Now Eden was located between four great rivers. A river went out of Eden to water the garden; and from there it separated and became the source of four rivers. The name of the first is Pishon; this is the one which goes around the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold, and the gold of that land is good. There is aromatic resin and the onyx stone. And the name of the second river is Gihon; it goes around the whole land of Cush. And the name of the third river is Hiddekel; this is the one which flows east of Ashur. And the fourth river is the Perath, which is called the Euphrates.[25] And Eden was near Atland, so that the Tree of Life was at its edge, and at its own center there grew a tree known as the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. When the human appeared in Eden, GOD commanded the human, saying, "Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat, but of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, you will not eat of it; for in the day that you eat of it you will surely die."[26]



And GOD said, "It is not good that they should be alone. I will make them a suitable partner." GOD brought animal to the human to see what they would call them and that became their name, so all the animals that the human gave names to became the tame animals. They named the dog, cat, goldfish, parrot, hamster, ferret, snake, fox, and iguana as companions.[27] But of all the animals chosen as companions, none were a suitable partner[28] for the human.
So GOD made another human out of the soil. For GOD imagined that if the human had one like themselves, they would finally have a partner. This human was called Lilith, for they were taken from night soil. And Adam indeed loved Lilith, but Lilith was wrong for Adam, for despite them being made a similar way, Adam could not be fulfilled. For Lilith wild and assertive, and when the two

[25] The rivers of Eden are said to represent everywhere from the Amazon over to the Yangtze. In other words, Eden is actually Earth prior to a time where good and evil existed.
[26] GOD does not create any precautions against eating the fruit of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. That is, this fruit represents two things, the perception of sin and the ability to have free will. GOD possibly wanted us to have free will, which is why it was placed in the center of Eden, where it could constantly be seen. But free will must be chosen, it cannot be given. By "surely die" it is to say that knowing good and evil made us flawed beings, capable of death. Eden was a setup.
[27] These are all names of pets owned by humans. Animals that aren't named in this fashion are considered wild animals.
[28] Companion is a friend but a partner is something one can feel true love towards. The distinction is made for this wicked era where people have no wives and no children. Animals are just companions, they are not intended as a replacement for human contact and true love.

made love, Lilith wanted to be on top, but Adam would not let them. So Lilith separated herself[29] from the presence of Adam, and went alone to cry. And GOD said to her, "Lilith, Lilith, why are you crying? Does not Adam love and care for you?" But she said to GOD all of her troubles. And GOD said, "Very well, I will free you from your marriage to Adam. Be happy." But Lilith remained alone, for none but GOD understood her struggle, and she let her anger at Adam turn her bitter. And she schemed to put an end to happy marriages and an end to love, hurting women and killing children.[30] For in children, she sees the love she never had.

After this, GOD decided that each human should have an other side, a perfect match to themselves. So GOD caused a deep sleep to fall on the human, and they slept; and they took one of their sides,[31] pulled them apart at the hip,[32] and closed up the flesh at that place. And the side that GOD had taken from the man was separated into a woman and she[33] brought her to the man. And the man said, "This at last is bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh. She will be called Woman, because Man was once a part of her." Therefore a man will leave his father and his mother, and will join with his beloved, and the two will become one flesh. And the two become one as man and wife. And GOD called Adam's wife Eve, because she was the mother of all living.[34] And they were both naked, Adam and Eve, and were not ashamed.

And every plant of the field before it was in Earth, and every herb of the field before it grew, though GOD had not caused it to rain upon Earth, and none had yet tilled the ground. Instead, there were many trees, and a thick fog was above the land, and the weather was pleasant for all who lived.[35]

CHAPTER 3

And Adam and Eve were created a model for other people to live by. Even so, the people did not yet know what GOD was doing, instead becoming trapped in their own vices.

And this is the way the people of ancient times lived. They hunted in packs like wolves, chasing down other creatures who overheated because humans had better sweat glands. The way humans lived were as killing machines. They slept in two four hour intervals with a watch in between. They hunted, they gathered, and they engaged in endless fights. The people of this time were burly and had thick skulls, not because of violence with animals, who they engaged with spears but because of violence with each other. They were as like wolves, and not like men.

As for love, this was often the cause of their violence. Everywhere, the people built tents in a circle, squatting at a fire to guard and keep away predators. They had tried living in caves but after dealing with bats and bears for awhile, they had decided this was a bad trade. And men and women married, because before marriage, there was a sense that women were violated. And the outcry was such, that the LORD taught the people love and marriage, and so they became connected to Adam and Eve by example. Within marriage, there were a few ways that worked, and one that really didn't.[36] The first way was of course a monogamy, though ancient people didn't always know how to make relationships last, so serial monogamy tended to be the norm rather than the exception. And so, if the marriage didn't last, the woman left the man's hut and returned to her own, and children would wind up a part of many families. The second was what is called partible paternity, which is to say the culture believed each man that a woman slept with brought something to a pregnancy. It was accepted that the child had the first father's eyes, and the fishing ability of the second father, and the hunting skill of the third

---

[29] Earlier I mentioned that Lilith wanted to be on top. These are double-sided humans, the front is male and the back is female. So Lilith referred to as herself meaning she split away from her male half, and left it behind from neglect, much like macho men who bury anything feminine or vulnerable. Destroying a part of yourself is toxic.

[30] Essentially, Lilith is the original feminist: a homewrecker and an abortionist. This is also an explanation for infant death.

[31] *Tsela*, or side, also means "rib". The side of a temple are called its ribs. That is, this refers to a two-sided human, a hermaphrodite.

[32] Hence the term joined at the hip, for a closely connected pair.

[33] GOD is the gender of those who they address. So now, GOD is "he" and "she."

[34] In other Bibles, Adam names his wife Eve. But since this is what Adam does to pets. I do not agree with Marxist feminism, but I do believe in complementary equals.

[35] Unlike the so-called greenhouse gases, this is a protective layer of thick moisture, that disrupts radiation. The rise of radiation prior to the Flood makes all this immortality stuff happen, with genetic manipulation and such, because just prior to that point, this protection breaks down.

[36] I'm listing these in order of my preference. These models are based on different cultures studied by anthropologists: the Hadza, the Bari people of the Amazon, the Tiwi, and the !Kung. I kinda like the marriage model of the Bari.

father. And since all fathers were involved in the child's upbringing, this became true. The third was polygamy, usually practiced by the exceedingly wealthy, for this arrangement usually resulted in a pecking order hierarchy that made the second and third wife onward very unhappy. And the fourth was a culture that had a big marriage and small marriage. The big marriage was the actual formal marriage, but nearly everyone had a relationship on the side. This unfortunately frequently led to murder or dueling.

Now some of the things of this era were admirable, such as their large close-knit families, compared to the disconnect of later humans. But when people went afoul of each other, this led to great violence and suffering. Even so, there was no law in these days, for it was before the fall. So everyone loved as best as they could, and the LORD so also loved them.

CHAPTER 4

Now the fox was the most clever of the wild animals which the man had named and which GOD had made, but the serpent was the most crafty of those named by the man (the spider was the most crafty of the animals, but the man had not named it as a companion, for he feared it).[37] And the serpent said to the woman, "Has GOD really said, 'You will not eat of any tree of the garden?'" And the woman said to the serpent, "Of the fruit of the trees of the garden we may eat, but of the fruit of the tree which is in the middle of the garden, GOD has said, 'You will not eat of it, neither will you touch it, lest you die.'" The serpent said to the woman, "You surely won't die, for GOD knows that in the day you eat it, your eyes will be opened, and you will be like GOD, knowing good and evil." Now as yet, no life had free will, but could only make decisions based on peer pressure.

Now the woman thought about this. And for a time she considered ignoring this decision, but the tree was in the center of the garden, and the garden of Eden was set as a perfect circle where all paths but the edge would lead to the tree, so that the decision preoccupied her thoughts.[38]

When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit, and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate. The eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked. So they sewed fig leaves together, and made coverings for themselves. They heard the voice of GOD walking in the garden during the breeze of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of GOD among the trees of the garden.

GOD called to the man, and said to him, "Where are you?" And he said, "I heard your voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; so I hid myself." And he said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?" The man said, "The woman who you gave to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I ate." GOD said to the woman, "What is this you have done?" The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate."[39] GOD said to the serpent, "Because you have done this, cursed are you above every tame animal, and above every wild animal. On your belly you will go, and you will eat dust all the days of your life. I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring. She will bruise your head, and you will bruise her heel." And to the woman she said, "I will greatly multiply your pain in childbirth. In pain you will bring forth children. Your desire will be for your husband, but he will rule over you."[40] To the man he said, "Because you have listened to your wife's voice, and have eaten of the tree, of which I commanded you, saying, 'You will not eat of it,' cursed is the ground for your sake. In toil you will eat of it all the days of your life. Thorns and thistles will it bring forth to you, and you will eat the plants of the field. By the sweat of your face will you eat bread until you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken. For you are dust, and to dust you will return."

Now Adam and Eve were in great misery, for knowing good and evil, misfortune and joy accompanied them. And Eve felt great love for her husband, who hated her because of his misfortune. And the two

---

[37] Cleverness is defensive, it's about avoiding snares and traps. Craftiness is aggressive knowledge to snare or trap others.

[38] This choice is set up as an imperative decision. Eve literally cannot put off making the choice, as it constantly intrudes on her thoughts.

[39] What's interesting here is that this is a scapegoat, but GOD accepts it without question.

[40] I tried to alternate GOD's gender as male/female/singular they. But after this point, GOD is mostly referred to as male. The punishment of women is to be made second class citizens. Even though it's not right, this is how most of the Bible is. I still tried to make GOD female if addressing Sarah or Mary, but it was harder.

of them feared death. Then GOD said, "The human has become like one of us, knowing good and evil. So now, let us send him out, lest they reach out their hand and also take of the Tree of Life and eat, and live forever. For then, their suffering would become unending."[41] And Adam and Eve climbed the mountain for they now sought after everlasting life, and it was between them and the Tree of Life. But GOD said to the mountain, "***Move***," and it moved. And so Adam and Eve were moved along with the mountain, and they found themselves where Israel now is. Therefore GOD sent Adam and Eve out of the garden of Eden, to till the ground from which he was formed. And he stationed a cherubim which turned every direction east of the garden of Eden, wielding a flaming sword, guarding the way to the Tree of Life from humans. And all life after Adam and Eve inherited their choice, so that everything (even that which predated them) has free will.[42] And Eden (as Heaven) is a place of unity, whereas the Earth that people came to is a place of separation (and loss). And so it is that all mankind is considered to have sinned, for in order to live on the Earth, involves a decision to separate on some level from GOD. And the price of sin is death. Remember you are dust, and that to dust shall return.[43]

CHAPTER 5

GOD taught Adam and his wife Eve to make clothing out of skins, to farm, to hunt and gather, to build shelter from the cold, and he taught them many skills to stay alive. But GOD did not always do so directly, for their faith had wavered in the past. Whenever Adam or Eve believed GOD was far from them, GOD nevertheless worked through seeming random events to give them what they needed. One day, they happened to see a tree on fire (but the LORD had not yet rained upon the Earth, and there were no storms),[44] and the LORD taught them to make flames on their own. They likewise discovered bread and beer when trying to make soup out of grain. And they found cheese by carrying milk in a bag made from an animal's stomach. And so, Eve and Adam learned how to live in a world of good and evil. [45] And Adam and Eve made love, and as promised, the act of love was glorious, but the labor thereafter was a torment to Eve, and she had great pain. And she had her firstborn son, Cain. And after this, she had another son, Abel. And these were the first brothers. There were also daughters among them, but these were not named herein. Eve loved her daughters because they would understand the pain of her flesh (pregnancy), but both parents treated Abel as the favorite. And the LORD loved him. And this was before it became a custom to give preference to the firstborn.[46]

Meanwhile, there lived the men of other lands. And these, through mediums and shamans came into contact with the watching stars from Heaven, the dead from Sheol, and the djinn of the Abyss through altered states.[47] And wandering stars (that were now known as Annunaki) visited men and taught them of many things to lead them away from GOD: drugs that altered the mind and body, of music (to such an extent that the people were constantly bombarded with noise), cosmetics (to confuse the natural beauty of the body), mirrors (to make them vain), the art of war, of understanding (and later worship) of the stars, the construction of statues and jewelry (and of enchantments and magic), and of architecture (all the better to keep people in walled cities). Now these were inventions that mankind would later learn to use more responsibly, but they were foisted on the people all at once, to corrupt them. And set apart for its wickedness were the people of the land of Nod, who were guided by spirits of evil to war and power and destruction.

Elsewhere, in Atland, Lilith still lived. And GOD saw that lonesomeness was making Lilith bitter, and she continually destroyed new children, and she said, "Lilith ought to have a mate." But Lilith has suppressed her other side, and had become detached. So GOD redeemed this part of her. And her

---

[41] This portion isn't well explained. Essentially, Knowledge of Good and Evil is a distortion of normal thought. A ladder isn't good or bad, it's a ladder. But a mind that is not developed enough to understand GOD's united purpose of the created world believes that a ladder is good or bad, based on whether it injures someone or not. GOD is saying that if we aren't able to die, human suffering (sin, or the state of living, as disobedience) as a result of this distortion continues forever.

[42]The condition of life in this world is the ability to make decisions, even those in disobedience to GOD. In other words, before you were born, you chose to disobey GOD.

[43] I'm effectively explaining the concept of Original Sin. I also tied to concept of mortality in with Ash Wednesday.

[44] Making this (wait for it) a burning bush.

[45] It is not possible for mankind (or any of the animals) to have survived the first years without being taught.

[46] I added this part to create framework for Abel's death. Cain is firstborn, but has all the responsibility with none of the perks.

[47] Outside of this world, there is Heaven in the sky, Sheol below the land, and the Abyss beneath the waters. Essentially, development throughout the world seems to have happened all at once, with Egyptians suddenly building pyramids, and then culture declined when people were forced to reproduce previous ideas after a generation.

mate was named Nifda,[48] for GOD had redeemed her male side. And she became mother of the people of Atland, the land positioned in the great northern center of the Earth where the pole stood, and where all the stars were centered. And Atland traded with many of lands outside it, and they had incredible technology that operated in accord with nature and lush gardens filled with produce, for it had formerly been east of the garden of Eden before humanity was unable to visit anymore. But the land sunk beneath the waves. It sunk because of a great sin. For the tree that aligned with the pole known as the Tree of Life continued to grow while the angel guarded it, until it was a great tree, which no man could climb, and they called it Yggdrasil, for they envisioned the Earth as part of nine worlds. And some of the people conspired to knock it down, reasoning that there are gods there. Others heard the story that its fruit would grant life everlasting. Still others wanted to cut all connection with GOD. But when it was cut, no sign of the fruit could be found; instead fragments of the tree fell on the land. And two groups formed concerning the tree. One of these had not wanted to cut the tree down, and gathered the cuttings to replant. Another group wanted to destroy every last part of it, since they could not claim the fruit for themselves. The people who wanted to destroy the tree were humans, and they eventually merged their line with the tribe of Cain. As for those who preserved the cuttings, these were changed by touching the Tree of Life. Their ears grew long and to a point, and they became long-lived. These people were known as the *álfar*.[49] The *álfar* possessed knowledge of good and evil, but they were allowed eternal life because they lived in balance with GOD and the natural world.[50] They did not hurt nor destroy on this holy mountain.[51] And they quietly planted saplings of the Tree of Life in secret, mixing them with other trees. Everywhere the saplings were planted, fertile places or new land sprung up, but whenever a tree would get too tall, humans would chop it down. Even so, the *álfar* people never gave up, and they did their work in secret. As for the land where the Tree of Life had been, they dug the tree up, in an attempt to destroy it. After that, the land began to erode around the center, and it sunk and collapsed into the sea, leaving naught but a whirlpool behind. And the people of this land fled to other lands. And after this, where before the water was steady, tides began to appear, for the whirlpool where Atland had been sucked water in and out. As for the trees cut down, some petrified into mountains.[52]

And so it was that the lands around Adam's family were in a struggle with sin. But GOD wished Adam's line to be set apart as holy, despite sin, so he guided them personally. As time passed, the LORD wished to see the offering of both Cain and Abel, for both had become skilled in the work of the field. So Cain brought an offering to the LORD from the fruit of the ground. And Abel also brought some of the firstborn of his flock and of its fat. And GOD looked favorably on Abel and his offering, but he did not look favorably on Cain and his offering, for it was not the first fruits. For Cain had wanted to keep all the fruits of his labor to himself, but also wanted to have what his brother worked for.[53] And a fierce wind scattered his grains and produce, while Abel's was consumed by fire. Cain was very angry, and the expression on his face fell. He believed that GOD favored the meat of Abel over the crops that he had worked so hard on.

The LORD said to Cain, "Cain, why are you angry? Why has the expression of your face fallen? Can you not see that your work brings joy to your family? When you bring joy to your family, your family

---

[48] Or "redeemed."

[49] These are canonical elves (although it derives from a Norse word that also includes dwarves). These beings are radiant beings, and they are probably able to heal harm done to their bodies and have supernatural powers. This added section is part of an extended environmental metaphor. Basically, there are people who want forests to be properly cared for, with pruning only for the prevention of overgrowth, and people who seem to enjoy cutting down the largest trees, even when they look healthy. And then there are fake environmentalists who claim to be saving the environmental but actually deforest the land to build solar plants or wind turbines.

[50] That is to say, GOD prevented Adam and Eve from eating the Tree of Life, because they were in a state of separation from GOD, and to make them eternal would make torment eternal in turn. But the *álfar* exist in balance with GOD's creation and are happy with how life is, so they are allowed to be immortal. This is distinct from how angels are in obedience to GOD, but also distinct from how humans are in disobedience to GOD.

[51] Reference to Isaiah, where they talk about the wolf lying down with the lamb, and the lion eating straw. The *álfar* are subspecies of human that are in harmony with Creation.

[52] There's a sort of urban legend that certain mountains look more like tree stumps than the effects of pressure or volcanic activity. I'm not about to say that all trees are like that. But could some of them be like this? Maybe.

[53] If there is a criticism of the greed of capitalism, this also has the greed present in socialism. Cain is just that petty.

brings joy to you! Never forget that the common life depends upon each other's toil.[54] Your brother Abel brings meat and milk to the table, you bring vegetables and grains. Can you not see that more than you can eat has been given as an opportunity to bring joy to others? Why are you missing the mark?" But all Cain heard was his own bitterness.

Now, GOD could have made Cain's harvests fail at this point, but instead, he showered him with grace, providing more harvests then he could eat himself in years. But this only served to remind Cain of his own envy of Abel, for while Abel could sit and play his panpipes, more crops meant more work to tend to. So Cain said to Abel, his brother, "Let's go into the field." When they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel, his brother, and killed him with a rock that had been sharpened. And blood splashed on the ground and the crops. It spilled over some of his onions and winter wheat, turning what it splashed on red. So too, it stained the color of most of his white beets, many of his peppers; and some dripped on his cabbages as it started to dry, turning it a deep purple color.

Later, GOD said to Cain, "Cain, where is your brother Abel?" He said, "I do not know. Am I his mother or father, that I should look after him? Should I be his keeper?" But GOD saw blood on the field where Cain stood, and saw how the crops were covered in a blood color. And a fox nearby was sniffing at Abel's panpipes that he had used to play to the sheep, which were now broken and covered in blood. And GOD said, "What have you done? The voice of your brother's blood cries out to me from the ground. Your brother's panpipes are the final evidence that I need. Now you are cursed because of the ground, which has opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand. From now on, when you till the ground, nothing will grow. You will be a fugitive and a wanderer in Earth." And Cain attempted to grow crops, but he found that everything he attempted immediately withered and turned as black as dried blood. So Cain had to live off of the kindness of strangers. Cain said to the LORD, "My punishment is greater than I can bear. You have driven me out this day from the surface of the ground. I will be hidden from your face, and I will be a fugitive and a wanderer in Earth. It will happen that whoever finds me will kill me." But the LORD said to him, "Not so. Whoever kills Cain vengeance will be taken on him sevenfold." The LORD appointed a sign for Cain, lest any finding him should strike him.[55] Cain suffered great hunger, wandering the land without being able to grow crops, but the LORD had some mercy on him, and declared, "Henceforth, thorned berries will grow through all the land. They will prick and cut like the knife you cut your brother Abel with, and they will be as dark as dried blood, but they will be plentiful, growing without the need of a planter. And I tell you now, these plants will grow as you cut down the plants around them and will sharpen their thorns to draw your blood. For just as you have killed, so also will your blood run. And so shall they be nourished by your suffering." Through this, Cain was able to avoid scurvy. Even today, such berries grow wild through all the land.[56]

Cain went out from GOD'S presence, and lived in the land of Nod, east of Eden. Cain had marital relations with his wife, and had children and grandchildren. Among these, one named Lamech killed a man. The man's only crime against him was bumping against him wrong, but irritation quickly gave way to anger. So Lamech said to his wives, "Adah and Zillah, hear my voice. You wives of Lamech, listen to my speech, for I have slain a man for wounding me, a young man for bruising me. If Cain will be avenged seven times, truly Lamech seventy times seven."[57] And Cain's line instituted a system of familial vengeance, which enacted *unjust violence*.[58]

But GOD had set aside Adam's line to be holy, despite sin. So Adam had marital relations with his wife again, and she gave birth to a son, and named him Seth, "for GOD has appointed me another child

---

[54] This is from the Order for Compline, "Watch over those, both night and day, who work while others sleep, and grant that we may never forget that our common life depends upon each other's toil..." The idea that we all have to work hard (capitalism), but work is never for its own sake but for community.

[55] Cain's punishment is an act of mercy, preventing others from seeking judgement against him. Also, contrary to racist teachings, there is no evidence that black skin is the sign meant here. If anything, this sign might have even been the sign of the cross, letting others know that this man was under GOD's protection. In fact, we'll draw a connection to the crown of thorns.

[56] The raspberry is actually native to Asia Minor, which kinda includes some of the land that Cain might have explored. The blackberry grows native throughout Europe.

[57] This was originally seventy-seven, but I changed the number to be a reminder of Peter's question about forgiveness.

[58] The word for "unjust violence" here is *hamas*. Like the Hamas today, who avenge because of minor slights because Sharia law is "eye for an eye."

instead of Abel, for Cain killed him." And a son was also born to Seth, and he named him Enosh. This one began to call on the LORD's name.

CHAPTER 6

This is the book of the generations of Adam. In the day that GOD created humankind, he made him in GOD's likeness. He created them male and female, and blessed them, and called their name "humankind" on the day when they were created. Adam lived two hundred and thirty years, and became the father of a son in his own likeness, after his image, and named him Seth. And the days of Adam and Eve were over nine hundred years, but eventually he died.

Seth and his children remembered the LORD, but the people of Earth worshiped gods of the land, the sky, the sea, or weather, or animals. They made ideas of gods out of the delusions of their minds, and they made statues to them and constantly sacrificed to them, including offering their own children. But no matter how fervently they believed, their sacrifices never seemed to be enough. For these gods were dumb idols, and could not answer their prayers. So the blood sacrifices continued, and wars were waged on behalf of the gods. And in those days, the people lived in great fear, for these were times before reason and logic.

Seth became the father of Enosh, fathered many other sons and daughters, and then he died at a ripe old age.[59] Enosh became the father of Kenan. Enosh lived after he became the father of Kenan, and also fathered other sons and daughters. Then he died when he was quite old, for the LORD blessed the line of Adam. Kenan became the father of Mahalalel and repeated the trend of many children, long life, then death. And so it was with Mahalalel who fathered Jared, then Jared fathered Enoch. Enoch fathered Methuselah, and Enoch walked with GOD. All the days of Enoch were three hundred and sixty-five years and after that he was not there, but he did *not* die, for GOD took him.[60]

Methuselah lived over nine hunded years, and then became a father of sons and daughters. Methuselah's first son (let us call him Ya'ash)[61] had a son, and he named him Noah, saying, "This one will comfort us in our labor and in the hard work of our hands, because of the ground which has been cursed." For in those days, the world was scorched and desolate through war and human sin. Now Noah was five hundred years old, when he became the father of Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

So the generations were thus, so you shall know that *man is appointed mortal sorrow, but the blessed GOD shall come down, for the purpose that his death shall bring to despair, rest.*[62]

CHAPTER 7

The sons of Cain and the daughters of Lilith mixed with the other people of the Earth, and there was a great swarm of those living as though cursed by GOD. And a great war began between the children of Cain and Lilith against those of Seth. For the people who were cursed were jealous of the favor bestowed on Seth's children. For them, crops wouldn't even grow, so they turned to hunting and the working of weapons. It was from this dark ambition that they constructed a weapon that could cause fire as bright as the sun to sprout out like a giant mushroom and spread over a wide area, with a great pollution that caused sickness to follow. And GOD cried out in anguish, "It was not supposed to be like this! I created you to be a companion to me. How did it turn out this way?!?" For the LORD saw that mankind may once again destroy itself. While Seth's children did not resort to war themselves, GOD made a mighty wind that pushed the weapons of Cain back on them. And some of the world was destroyed man's own doing by fire, while the great monuments of destruction advanced on the land. To this day, many areas are still turned to glass, with rumors of being "haunted." The truth is these places (like Rajasthan) still bear the corruption of this war to this very day.

Of the descendants of Cain, soon only Lamech's son Tubal Cain survived, but he persisted to make many descendants. And the LORD said from the wreckage of this war and pollution, "My Spirit will not remain in humankind forever, since he is indeed flesh, so his days will be one hundred twenty

---

[59] I decided to keep the timeline vague. This allows for any prehistory that may not be accounted for. Closing such times as a strict timeline sweeps those away.

[60] Enoch didn't die, then. Normally, Sheol was the Afterlife of all the dead, a shadowy underworld more akin to underground burial sites.

[61] Confusingly named Lamech. Lamech means "strength" and "despair", I chose word meaning the latter.

[62] An acrostic using their names. Man (Adam), Appointed (Seth), Mortal (Enosh), Sorrow (Kenan), Blessed GOD (Mahalalel), Descent (Jared), Dedicated (Enoch), Man of the Spear/His Death Brings (Methuselah), Despair (Lamech/Ya'ash), Rest (Noah)

years." For the land had been defiled, and so also the people who lived on the land. But more than pollution, war, and other evil was the corruption of the flesh. And yet, Noah and Tubal Cain both lived on through this war, and Tubal Cain tormented Noah and his kin for much of their lives.
Now from generations from Adam to Noah, there were about sixteen hundred years. Noah and his family lived on, for GOD was with them. But when the other people found their lives cut short, they devised ways to live longer. Meanwhile, the Annunaki realized that they no longer held sway among the children of mankind, and that GOD favored human progress, and they became jealous and enraged.
So they said among themselves, "Our slaves have sought to become free, and now are doing what we do not command, and not what GOD commands either. So we will corrupt their blood, that they serve us again." So the Annunaki appeared as wandering stars, brilliant and beautiful. So the daughters of humans began to take sons for themselves from these wandering stars. For the children of men were willing to try anything to live longer. And there were in those days giants among the earth, known as the Nephilim. The parents of Nephilim were mighty and shrewd, and granted secret knowledge to man of technology and the occult. But the Nephilim were men of great height and renown, but of monstrous appetites, and they began to rule over men, demanding tributes and great statues. They were not doing this because they were born evil, they were simply born *wrong*. And so, human became slaves (and a food source). And the Annunaki helped this process along by promising a new technology.[63] And they encouraged men to mix their blood with not just with themselves, but also lesser beings: the beasts of the land, the birds of the air, and even the creatures under the sea. Yet these Nephilim and these beastkin were making more of themselves and there were less of the children of men. And a darker goal arose, to attempt to return the bloodline of humanity from creative beings with a gift of free will to a lesser species. For the Annunaki, the correct place of mankind was to be as slaves and mere animals, not as creations in the image of GOD. And not just man, but all of life was becoming corrupt, so that little of the original creation remained. And unstable creatures began to people the land. For the Annunaki began to say, "All the creatures around here suck. We need to make them cooler. So the theme will be: rougher, tougher, badder! We'll mix and match this and that to make whole new things nobody has ever seen before!"[64] And indeed, they were badder. Erm, worse. Creatures became sick, and mankind became wicked.
But GOD said, "I desire neither slaves nor the wicked. I desire the line of Adam to persist, for through Adam, all sinned." For GOD desired for the salvation and the freedom of man.[65] And the LORD feared for the wickedness of humankind, that they would continue to leaven in evil until there would be no good at all left.[66] So GOD was sorry for making humankind, and he grieved for their sake. GOD said, "I will wash away everything of the earth and sky, yet even so, I will always keep a remnant."
Noah and his family found favor in the sight of the LORD, and he was of the line of Adam. Noah was a righteous man, blameless among the people of his time. Noah walked with GOD. Noah became the father of three sons: Shem, Ham, and Japheth. And GOD said to Noah, "The end of all flesh has come before me, for Earth is filled with violence through them. You therefore will make a box-shaped vessel of acacia.[67] You are to make rooms in the vessel, and cover it inside and outside with pitch. And this is how you are to make it. The length of the vessel is to be five hundred seventeen feet, its breadth eighty-six feet, and its height fifty-two feet *per deck*.[68] And you are to make a roof in the vessel, and

---

[63] Genetic engineering.
[64] This is a pretty close paraphrase of the Chimera Project in a video game called *Mother 3*.
[65] It is generally believed that these giants are an attempt to crossbreed humans and angels, forming what is known as Nephilim. The result was likely a man that had the ambition of humanity yet the knowledge of angels, able to make things like what modern people have. Likely these cities threatened the natural world with depletion of resources. GOD isn't punishing sinners, so much as ending certain sin. While plenty of people died, it wasn't out of malice for humans.
[66] JESUS made a parable of the Kingdom of GOD being like leaven affecting the whole flour. The idea being that he didn't want humanity to go all bad, and that salvation for humans is possible mainly if there are humans in the first place.
[67] Originally, it says "gopher wood" but the wood of the ark of the covenant was acacia, so I'm suspecting it's the same wood in memory of this event. It's weak connection, but gophers do (sometimes) share a habitat with acacia. I also later mentioned the roof have the same pattern of stones as an *ephod*. GOD doesn't just have things happen, but wants us to make connections.
[68] I added the per deck part. From an engineering standpoint, the boat would not only be extremely crowded, but then you divide the total height and with the addition of a pool for plants and sea animals, and you need extra clearance. Also, there's a problem of buoyancy which needs extra volume for mass. I also compared it to an existing boat, the Titanic, which was 882 feet

you are to finish it twenty-one inches thick. And you are to set the door of the vessel in its side. You are to make it with lower, second, and third levels. I am bringing a flood of waters on Earth, that will destroy all flesh having the breath of life from under the sky. Everything that is on land will die, except what I allow to be spared. But I will establish my covenant with you. You are to come into the vessel, you, your wife, your sons and their wives with you. Of every living thing of all flesh, you are to bring two of every animal into the vessel, to keep them alive with you. They will be male and female. Of the flying creatures after their kind, of the animals after their kind, and of every crawling creature of the ground after their kind, two of every sort will come to you, to keep them alive. And you will make a large container of wood and earthenware in the center of the larger vessel on the top and second level: the one on the top floor which carries soil and which you will bring trees and other plants, so that the plants of the Earth persist, and it will be fitted with wooden walls all the way to the ceiling of the vessel, and the ceiling of the vessel will be carved with twelve precious stones arranged in four rows, to give light to those living in the vessel; and the one in the second level will be nailed shut on top, except for a small lid on the container for drawing fresh water for drinking and watering the plants. And the room will have small openings for plants to give air to the ship. And as for you, take for yourself all the kinds of food that are eaten, and gather it to yourself on the bottom level. For it will be food for you, and for them." Now, Noah had animals for sacrifice, but he did no sacrifices while aboard, for the stench was unclean. Instead, he had storage in the bottom deck of grains for bread and vegetables and fruits and nuts from the containers. The fish known as the *amnon*[69] from the water container in the middle deck could be taken as food. And Noah had also made in advance *kreplach*, a type of dumplings, and so Noah preserved meat in salt and flour. Since the dumplings were many and the sacrifices were few, the *kreplach* usually eaten were in place of the sacrifices.[70] Thus Noah did everything according to what GOD commanded him, and he lived. And he also took sea creatures of male and female that must surface for air, such as dolphins and whales (Noah placed the children of the whales, for the adults were too large) in a room with a large earthenware tub with plenty of air in the top. And Noah also built a means for air and light to reach the water, as GOD instructed him, small holes that connected the garden above to the room below. For the rain would soon reach a height that even birds high in the sky were unable to find dry land, so it would be impossible for surfacing sea life to survive. And GOD had also instructed Noah, "Collect clams and snails to populate the room where I commanded you to make for the sea creatures." And Noah objected, "I shall not touch any unclean thing!"[71] But the LORD told him, "These creatures that you call unclean shall make the water clean. Go and do as I have said."

CHAPTER 8

And the LORD said to Noah, "Come with all of your household into the vessel, for I have seen your righteousness before me in this generation. You will take seven pairs of every clean animal from land and sky with you, the male and his female, for food and sacrifice.[72] Of the animals that are not clean, take two, the male and his female, to preserve their offspring on the surface of all Earth. And you will take twelve pairs of one clean fish, and you will place it in the container of water as food for yourself and the animals in the vessel. Take only one type of clean fish, for I will cause the fish of the Earth to survive. In seven days, I will cause it to rain on Earth for forty days and forty nights. Every living thing that I have made, I will destroy from the surface of the ground."

Noah did everything that the LORD commanded him. Noah went into the vessel with his sons Shem, Ham, and Japheth, his own wife, and his sons' wives, because of the waters of the flood. Clean animals, animals that were not clean, flying creatures, and everything that crawls on the ground went by pairs to Noah into the vessel, male and female, as GOD commanded Noah. Now some animals like ticks, fleas, lice, and bacteria of all sorts did not arrive by Noah's action but attached themselves to

---

long, 92 feet wide, and 175 feet tall. I could be wrong, but this is comparable.

[69] What is later called Saint Peter's Fish or Galilee Tilapia.

[70] Dumplings were originally as a sort of substitute sacrifice, like JESUS later. In Japan, dumplings were often an offering instead of the sacrifice. *Kreplach* is also eaten during many Jewish ceremonies so I suspect the idea is the same. It says of *kreplach* that meat (symbolizing "judgement") is encased in bread ("mercy"). It also has a cross pattern.

[71] Echoing Peter's own objection to pork.

[72] For food and for sacrifices. The number seven is also a numerologically sacred number.

other creatures or things. After the seven days, the waters of the flood came on Earth. They went to Noah into the vessel, by pairs of all flesh with the breath of life in them. Those who went in, went in male and female, as GOD commanded, then the LORD shut him in. And all outside the vessel, the Second Secret War was raging. The descendants of Cain, the Nephilim, and many others were using weapons of mass destruction,[73] and the world was covered in heat and toxic material. But the LORD kept Noah and the animals completely safe, and he obeyed GOD's commands.[74]

In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, on the seventeenth day of the month, all the fountains of the great deep were burst open, and the floodgates of the sky were opened. The rain was on Earth forty days and forty nights.

The waters increased, and lifted up the vessel, and it was lifted up above Earth, high enough to drown birds and move loose islands. And all the high mountains that were under the whole sky were covered. The waters rose and covered the even highest mountains by more than twenty-six feet.[75] The waters prevailed, and increased greatly on Earth, and the vessel floated on the surface of the waters.

Now the most beautiful and majestic of all creatures was the unicorn. It had been gifted by GOD with sacred power to heal wounds with its horn, its footsteps made flowers grow behind it, and its blood was said to raise the dying. Yet it was a proud and carefree creature, and so it said, "Surely GOD will not cause the destruction to come."[76] So it slept peacefully when gentle rains came. And it frolicked about then heavier rains came, becoming concerned only when the water was beginning to be up to its waist. And that is why you'll see green alligators and long necked beasts, you'll see hump-backed camels and chimpanzees. You'll see cats. And you'll see rats. And you'll see elephants. But you'll never see any unicorn.

Now this is how Noah and his family stayed alive and clean. In the first days, they planted the grains, vegetables, and fruit tree saplings in the soil, but the plants that were not food remained as seeds in storage. And his family ate of fruits and supplies from the containers, but the fish were too few to take. As to the herb-loving animals, they also ate grains, though the pickled vegetables were too salty for them. As to the meat-loving animals, they were given excess milk from the other animals, and also the fish and the *kreplach* from the supply containers. As to the trees, Noah shoveled night soil from the animals and gave them water to drink, and GOD supplied them with light. And Noah shoveled the waste from soil and plants grew plankton and wild sea grasses so that the sea creatures could live. And some of the sea creatures ate other sea creatures.

For a time, Noah's child Ham fretted because aside from the fruit, none of the plants had grown yet. And none of the sea grasses had grown. And although there was still food in containers, he had done the calculations. And while they had food for themselves to eat, Ham said to his father, "The sea creatures will starve, and the land creatures will starve after them. And we also shall starve. Should we not kill some of these animals that are weighing down the ship and eat them?" But Noah silenced him, "Have patience. The LORD will provide!" And until the time when the grains and vegetables grew, the sea grasses grew, and the fish eggs hatched, the supplies did not run out as had been predicted. And GOD supplied their needs within the ark.

The waters rose very high on Earth. And all flesh died that moved on Earth, flying creatures, and tame animals, and wild animals, and every creature that crawls on Earth, and all humankind. All in whose nostrils breathed the breath of life, of all that was on the dry land died. Every living thing was destroyed that was on the surface of the ground, including people, animals, crawling creatures, and even the great flying creatures of the sky. They were destroyed from Earth. The waters prevailed on Earth one hundred fifty days. But all of the children of Cain died and their bodies were destroyed.

---

[73] Nuclear weapons. Hence later, they mention a diminished lifespan.

[74] Plants with high lignin content screen out radiation, though this is still very much a miracle.

[75] A height of 29058 ft, unless we are going by the highest mountains around Israel, which is about 7362 ft. Assuming the former, it would need to amount to 90 inches worldwide per hour. I added a section about floating islands because some places (like Japan) have no flood story. They do however, have stories about sky islands. Such islands might have survived by being knocked loose and floating about, which would account for places with no flood story. They simply didn't notice the effects because they were buoyant.

[76] To some extent, this echoes my "no end times" mindset. Not to say that it is wrong in Revelation in terms of everlasting punishment or destruction, but in terms of temporal destruction, you really have to be paying attention to the signs of the times. Basically, I know that I can take my own philosophy too far. And yes, it's the Unicorn song.

Likewise, all of the Nephilim were sent to the Abyss without their bodies. And their spirits wandered near the Abyss.[77] And the Annunaki could not be slain by water, so the LORD told them, "You who were stars sent to watch over humanity, because you have disobeyed, and wandered away from your post, you are condemned to wander." And these became the wandering stars, known as planets. The beastkin were also washed away, along with the methods of making more of them. Even so, there are many legends about the Fey still today, so some beings may have managed to survive through their own determination or GOD's mercy. This is the reason that the fantasy genre persists, because they tell us suppressed histories of creatures who survived the rise of water.[78] And of those who survived, they lived on unable to reproduce with mankind, but to this day, they comprise four species.[79]

Now, in some lands, other boats were built, as GOD sent them dreams to warn them. In Mesopotamia, Utnapishtim likewise took a boat. In Iran, it was a man named Yima. In Taiwan, Oppehnaboon built his boat. This flood spread far and wide, from China to the Phillipines and South America. Quite a few families were spared. But as far as Noah understood, his family were the only ones to be saved from this destruction,[80] for every living creature that did not find a boat died. And indeed it did not much matter, for in time, all of the Earth would be united as one language and tribe, as people mixed with people. These were all the children of Adam.

It has been said by the Hindu people that civilization may have destroyed itself before. In their version of events, it was a great war rather than a flood, a war with weapons called *Brahmastra* that almost destroyed the world. In this way, GOD was not only ridding the world of corruption, but also washing away the pollution of such weapons.[81]

CHAPTER 9

And GOD remembered Noah, and all the wild animals, and all the tame animals, and all the flying creatures, and all the crawling creatures that were with him in the vessel. And GOD made a hot wind to pass over Earth, and the waters began to recede. And the fountains of the deep and the floodgates of the sky were closed, and the rain from the sky was restrained. And a gentle but steady breeze blew any excess water where it is, even today.[82]

And the waters receded steadily from the land. And after the end of one hundred fifty days the waters had decreased significantly. And in the seventh month, on the seventeenth day of the month, the vessel came to rest on the mountains of Ararat. The waters receded continually to the tenth month. In the tenth month, on the first day of the month, the tops of the mountains became visible.

It happened at the end of forty days, that Noah opened the window of the vessel which he had made, and he sent forth a raven. It went back and forth, until the waters had dried up from Earth. But that raven never returned. Then he sent forth a dove from it, to see if the waters had abated from the surface of the ground, but the dove found no place to rest her foot, and she returned to him into the vessel, for the waters were on the surface of the whole Earth.[83] He put forth his hand, and took her, and brought her to him into the vessel.

And he waited yet another seven days; and again he sent forth the dove out of the vessel. The dove came back to him at evening, and in her mouth was an olive leaf plucked off. So Noah knew that the

---

[77] This is the origin of the idea of demon possession. The demons are disembodied from being sunk under the waves, so they act as restless spirits in the time of Christ.

[78] In other words, these beings may still live in this world in disguise, as what some people call Seelie or Unseelie faeries, what Eastern religion calls sattva and ashura, or what Robert Jordan calls "the Foxes and Snakes."

[79] I'm making a parallel between the four species of Sukkot and the fantastic races. Demons and Unseelie beastkin are willow (neither Torah nor good deeds), the *álfar* are lemon (good deeds and Torah, because they obey the law from their own heart), angels and Seelie beastkin are myrtle (they obey the law but it is not from their own will), and *djinn* are date palm (they perform good deeds by granting wishes and prayers, but they do not follow the law). Humans are the Sukkot hosts.

[80] I decided it was important for people to realize that GOD doesn't condemn the entire Earth, and that this is a myth of the whole world.

[81] The Hindus believe in ancient nukes, specifically a weapon known as the Brahmastra.

[82] Some people in their fervor to discount anything of the Bible insist that there never was a flood that covered the while Earth because the level of water would move up to the top regions of the sky. But the thing is, nearly all cultures, except for Japan and a few others have a flood myth.

[83] Atheists like to pick at that one section says that it flooded over the whole Earth. But this flood is mentioned as having happened from South America to China. What this means is that certain landforms, particularly the Bering Strait and Northern Australia were permanently sunk underwater. Even the Sphinx has a water line, though most of it is at the level of when water receded. It's also not certain whether they mean the highest mountains worldwide or around Israel.

waters had abated from Earth. He stayed yet another seven days and sent forth the doves, and they did not return to him any more.
And it happened in the six hundred first year of Noah's life, in the first month, the first day of the month, the waters had dried up from Earth. And Noah removed the covering of the vessel and looked out. And the surface of the ground was dry.

CHOSEN PEOPLE

CHAPTER 1

In the second month, on the twenty-seventh day of the month, Earth was dry. GOD spoke to Noah, saying, "Go out of the vessel, you, and your wife, and your sons, and your sons' wives with you. Bring out with you every living thing, whether from land, sky, or sea, that they may swarm on Earth, and be fruitful and multiply on Earth." And Noah went forth, with his sons, his wife, and his sons' wives with him. And every creature inside was moved out of the vessel. Now for the land and sky creatures, it was simply a matter of herding them out the door. But the plants had to be dug up and transplanted nearby, and the descendants of some of these are still growing there today. As for the sea life, it was a major chore. His children and his wife helped him disassemble the container that held the plants, and he turned it into a large ramp. Now the sea was filled with the remains of dead creatures from the flooding, so it was salty from then on. But the dolphins, the whales, and the *amnon* were all contained in clean and fresh water, suitable for drinking while on the ark. This is why such animals today can be found in freshwater and saltwater. And to this day, there is still a rock impression from the vessel near the land of Ararat.
Noah took apart the ramp and scrapped the wood for burning, and he built an altar to GOD, and taking from each clean animal, he offered burnt offerings on the altar. And the LORD smelled the pleasing aroma, and the LORD said in his heart, "I will never again curse the ground because of humankind, nor will I again destroy every living thing, as I have done.[84] While Earth remains, seed time and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night will not cease. But neither will my love cease." And a rainbow appeared as the sun came out.

So GOD blessed Noah and his sons, and said to them, "Be fruitful, and multiply, and fill Earth. And the fear of you and the dread of you will be on every wild animal of Earth, and on every tame animal

[84] Revelation is in direct conflict with this promise. That is, such end-times text can only be made by Satan or evil humans, because it accuses GOD of being a liar. The Earth will be destroyed only if or when its natural limits come, not because of GOD's wrath. Some theologians also make a distinction that GOD means he will never destroy the Earth again by water, but it doesn't say this. It says while Earth remains. There may come an end to this Earth, but this is far different from an end for the purpose of judgement.

of Earth, and on every flying creature of the sky, and on everything that crawls on the ground, and on all the fish of the sea. For into your power they are given. Every moving thing that lives will be food for you. As I gave the green plants, I now give you everything. But flesh with its life intact, its blood, you will not eat. And surely I will require a reckoning for your lifeblood; from every animal I will require it, and from humans. From every human being I will require it for the life of his fellow human being. Whoever takes a human life, by a human will his life be taken, for GOD made humankind in his own image."
GOD spoke to Noah and to his sons with him, saying, "And as for me, I establish my covenant with you, and with your offspring after you, and with every living creature that is with you from the vessel. I will establish my covenant with you; and all flesh will never again be cut off by the waters of the flood, neither will there ever again be a flood to destroy Earth."
GOD said, "This is the sign of the covenant which I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for perpetual generations: I set my rainbow in the cloud, and it will be a sign of the covenant between me and Earth. When I bring a cloud over Earth, that the rainbow will be seen in the cloud, and I will remember my everlasting covenant, which is between me and you and every living creature of all flesh, and the waters will no more become a flood to destroy all flesh that is on Earth."
GOD said to Noah, "This is the sign of the covenant which I have established between me and all flesh that is on Earth." And as he said it, a rainbow appeared so that Noah and his family could see what he meant.
The sons of Noah who came out of the vessel were Shem, Ham, and Japheth. Ham is the father of Canaan. These were the three sons of Noah, and from them the whole Earth was populated. Noah, a farmer, was the first to plant a vineyard. He drank of the wine and got drunk. He was passed out uncovered within his tent. And Ham, the father of Canaan, saw his father naked and exposed him.[85] And told his two brothers outside that his father was naked and unconscious, and his wife nowhere to be found. But Shem and Japheth did not follow their brother's example. They took a garment, and laid it on both their shoulders, went in backwards, and covered the nakedness of their father. Their faces were turned the other way, and they did not see expose him. Noah awoke from his wine, and GOD told him what his youngest son had done to him.
Noah said, "Let Ham be cursed." He also said, "Blessed be the GOD of Shem and Japheth."[86]
Noah lived three hundred fifty years after the flood. All the days of Noah were nine hundred and fifty years, then he died. And Shem, Ham, and Japheth all had many generations. And from these the nations branched out on Earth after the flood.

CHAPTER 2

The whole Earth was of one language and of one speech. And one of the sons of Ham, known as Nimrod, a man was born as a mighty hunter, was blessed with strength and power. Therefore it is said, "Like Nimrod, a mighty hunter before the LORD."[87] But he prevailed upon those around him not to ascribe it to the LORD, for he carried a curse from the LORD that he would serve his brothers. So it delighted him to assert false power over others. And thinking of how the LORD had flooded the Earth, he resolved to make a safeguard against other floods.
It happened, as they traveled from the east, that he found a plain in the land of Shinar (what was later called Babylon), and settled there. And commanded the people one to another, "Come, let us make bricks, and burn them thoroughly." They had brick for stone, and they used tar for mortar. And he said, "Come, let us build ourselves a city, and a tower whose top reaches to the sky, and let us make ourselves a name, lest we be scattered abroad on the surface of the whole Earth." For he gradually

[85] That is to say, he had sex with his father.
[86] There is a completely unnecessary bit about Ham being a servant, which rationalized alot of slavery mentality. No thanks.
[87] Nimrod's name is mentioned in extra-biblical literature as having planned the building of the Tower of Babel. According to Flavius Josephus, "He also gradually changed the government into tyranny, seeing no other way of turning men from the fear of GOD, but to bring them into a constant dependence on his power. He also said he would be revenged on GOD, if he should have a mind to drown the world again; for that he would build a tower too high for the waters to reach. And that he would avenge himself on GOD for destroying their forefathers." Nimrod is representative of the fact that GOD isn't so much a lawmaker, but rather humans in disobedience to GOD, set up tyrannical kings. In other words, harsh laws are not because of religion, but in conflict to GOD.

changed the proper government of these lands to a tyranny, so that people would turn their minds away from trust in GOD, and instead fear the government and what it could threaten. And he convinced the people that there is no Afterlife, and built myths and forged gods of stone and wood and silver and gold. He called these gods Ishtar, Baal,[88] and Tammuz and made the people sacrifice to their images, and made them fear the power of everything he had artificed. And he named the land "the land between the rivers" to distract the people from the real land between the rivers known as Eden, and turned them from worship of GOD with false legends. And he resolved to build a tower that would come to be known as Babel.

But the LORD came down to see the city and the tower, that humankind was building, and the LORD said, "They are one people, and they all have one language, and this is what they begin to do. So now nothing which they plan to do will be too difficult for them. Come, let us go down, and there confuse their language, that they may be scattered. For it is not good for people to be of one tribe."[89] Then the LORD scattered them abroad from there on the surface of all Earth; so they ceased building the city. Therefore its name was called Babel, because there the LORD confused the language of all Earth. From there, the LORD scattered them over the face of the whole Earth. This is why Baal, Ishtar, and Tammuz are known by different names throughout pagan tribes.

Now about this time, the lifespan of mankind decreased. Shem lived five hundred years after that, and fathered sons and daughters. Then Arpachshad four hundred and thirty years, and fathered sons and daughters. And Kenan three hundred and thirty years, and fathered sons and daughters. Shelah four hundred and three years. Eber lived three hundred and seventy years. Peleg lived two hundred and nine years. Reu lived two hundred and seven years. Serug lived two hundred years. Nahor lived one hundred and twenty-nine years after he became the father of Terah. Terah lived two hundred and five years, and became the father of Abram, Nahor, and Haran. And Haran became the father of Lot. And Abram and Nahor took wives. The name of Abram's wife was Sarai. But Sarai was barren, and had no child. And Terah took Abram his son and Lot, and Sarai his daughter-in-law, and he set out from Ur Kasdim to go into the region named Padanaram. And Terah died.[90]

CHAPTER 3

Now Abram lived in a land of idols, but he was troubled for his wife was barren, and he prayed much to these idols but they could not do anything to cure her sterility. So one day, he told the elders of this land that he was leaving, for these false gods were nothing but carvings. At this, the priests vowed to curse him but he laughed it off. Then he heard the LORD's voice.

The LORD had said to Abram, "Go out from your country, and from your relatives, and from your father's house, to the land that I will show you. And I will make of you a great nation. And I will bless you and make your name great. And you will be a blessing. And I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse those who treat you with contempt, and through you all the families of Earth will be blessed."

So Abram left, as the LORD had told him. And Abram took Sarai his wife, Lot his brother's son, and all their possessions that they had accumulated, and the people who they had acquired in Haran, and they left to go to the land of Canaan. At that time the Canaanites were in the land.

The LORD appeared to Abram and said to him, "I will give this land to your offspring." He built an altar there to the LORD, who appeared to him. He left from there to the mountain on the east of Bethel. There he also built an altar to the LORD. And Abram traveled on, continuing toward the Negev.

There was a famine in the land, so Abram went down into Egypt to sojourn there, because the famine was severe in the land. It happened, when he had come near to enter Egypt, that he said to Sarai his

---

[88] Baal confusingly means "lord" and is a thunder god. Yahweh was a Canaanite thunder god, and called the same. Almost as though this deity was designed to lead the Hebrew people astray. We ought to call the LORD GOD, and keep in mind that GOD created everything, unlike a petty thunder god of the Canaanite people. I AM is the real GOD not Yahweh.

[89] The "we are the world" types think that unity is a good thing. But the Body of Christ is described as a body with different members that each have different roles. When we are all the same, we are not only deeply oppressed, but essentially alone. It all really goes back to this. Humans are meant for companionship, not for unity.

[90] Something is causing a decline in lifespan from Noah to Abram. We see this again around the time of Joseph after the seven year famine. I attribute it to genetic damage of some sort, either through harsh living conditions or some other cause. But I have a theory about an ancient nuclear war.

wife, "I know what a beautiful woman you are. When the Egyptians will see you, that they will say, 'This is his wife.' And they will kill me, but they will let you live. Please say that you are my sister, that it may be well with me for your sake, and that I may live because of you."
Indeed, the Egyptians saw that the woman was very beautiful. The princes of Pharaoh saw her, and praised her to Pharaoh, and Pharaoh dealt well with Abram for her sake, offering him servants, sheep, cattle, male donkeys, female donkeys, and camels. But GOD plagued Pharaoh and his house with great and grievous plagues because of Sarai, Abram's wife. And Pharaoh was troubled, until he received word in a dream why he was being plagued. For the LORD told him that this was his wife. So Pharaoh summoned Abram and said, "What is this that you have done to me? Why did you not tell me that she was your wife? Why did you say, 'She is my sister,' so that I took her to be my wife? Now therefore, your wife is before you. Take her, and go."
Abram went up out of Egypt: he, his wife, and all his possessions, and Lot with him, into the Negev. Now Abram was very rich in livestock, in silver, and in gold. He went on his journeys from the Negev even to Bethel, to the place where his tent had been at the beginning, between Bethel and Ai, to the place where he had first built the altar. And there Abram called on the name of the LORD.
And Lot went also, but the were too many herds for the land to handle, so they split up possessions. But there was fighting among the herders, who each wanted a better share. So Abram divided it equally, and said to Lot, "Let there be no strife between me and you, and between my herdsmen and your herdsmen. We are all relatives. If you go to the left hand, then I will go to the right. Or if you go to the right hand, then I will go to the left."
Lot looked the plain of the Jordan, that it was well-watered everywhere, like the garden of Eden, in the direction of Sodom. So Lot chose the Plain of the Jordan for himself. Lot traveled east, and they separated from each other. So Abram went west into the land of Canaan, and Lot lived in the cities of the plain.
Now the people of Sodom were evil, sinning greatly against GOD. Whatever they wanted, whether person or animal, they took by force. Nor did they have compassion, hospitality, propriety, or kindness. And they were greatly corrupt in government, sexually immoral, and had made excuses for their wicked behavior.
GOD said to Abram after Lot had departed from him, "Now, lift up your eyes, and look from the place where you are, northward and southward and eastward and westward, for all the land which you see I will give to you and to your offspring forever. Arise, walk through the land in its length and in its breadth; for I will give it to you." Abram moved his tent, and came and lived by the oaks of Mamre, which are in Hebron, and built an altar there to the LORD.
And on his travels, he came to the land of Salem. And the king of Salem was a man named Melchizedek, who admired Abram. Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine, for he was priest of GOD Most High. He blessed him, and said, "Blessed be Abram by GOD Most High, Maker of Heaven and Earth: and blessed be GOD Most High, who has delivered your enemies into your hand." And he gave him a tenth of everything.

CHAPTER 4

Now the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah fled from the Valley of Siddim (which is known for its tar pits), and they took all the possessions of all who lived their and all their food. And they held the people captive, including Lot.
One of the residents of the town escaped, and seeking help for their plight, went to nearby towns and he said, "Our kings have taken complete control and holding our people captive. We have no money or food." And this word reached Abram, so asked about his nephew Lot. And he was told, "He also is held captive."
So when you heard this, he took with him three hundred and eighteen men, and he directed these forces against them at night, attacked them and drove them back to an area near Damascus. And he returned these possessions and brought Lot out of captivity, along with any others oppressed within those towns.
Now the king of Sodom went out to meet him, and they met at the valley of Shaveh (also known as the King's Valley). Now the king of Sodom said to Abram, "Give me the people, and I will give you possessions for yourself." For he sought to bribe him to betray his relative Lot, along with the other

people of Sodom. But Abram refused the king of Sodom, "I have lifted up my hand to GOD Most High, Maker of Heaven and Earth, that I will not take a thread nor a sandal strap nor anything that is yours, lest you should say, 'I have made Abram rich.' I will accept nothing from you except for food for those you have taken captive. Let them take their portion."
After this, the people of Sodom had decided they had enough of their king, so they overthrew him. So it was Sodom and Gomorrah were without a king, and everyone did what was right in their own eyes.

CHAPTER 5

And very quickly, Sodom descended to decay. And the LORD said to himself, "Will I hide from Abram what I am about to do, seeing that Abram is who I have chosen? For I have made myself known to him, so that he may command his household after him, that they may keep the way of the LORD, to do righteousness and justice, so that I may bring to Abram that which he has spoken to him."
The LORD said, "Because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is so grievous, I will go down now, and see whether they have done entirely according to the outcry which has come to me. And if not, I will know personally." And the LORD, who had appeared before Abram as a woman while traveling with the two other visitors, now appeared as a man. For the LORD had heard that the people of Sodom and Gomorrah had... peculiar tastes. The visitors turned from there, and went toward Sodom, but Abram asked the LORD to remain.
Abram drew near, and said to him, "Will you sweep away the righteous with the wicked? What about if there are fifty righteous within the city? Will you destroy it, and not spare the place for the fifty righteous who are in it? Is it just to kill the righteous with the wicked, so that the righteous should be like the wicked? Shouldn't the Judge of all Earth do right?" The LORD said to Abram, "If I find in Sodom fifty righteous within the city, then I will spare all the place for their sake." Abram answered, "I have taken it on myself to speak to the LORD, I who am but dust and ashes. What about if there are five less righteous in Sodom? Will you destroy all the city for lack of five?" The LORD said, "I will not destroy it, if I find forty-five righteous there." Abram spoke to him yet again, and said, "What if there are only forty righteous found there?" He said, "I will not do it for the forty's sake." Abram said, "What if there are thirty found there?" He said, "I will not do it, if I find thirty there." Abram said, "What if there are twenty found there?" He said, "I will not destroy it for the twenty's sake." Abram said, "Oh do not let the LORD be angry, and I will speak just once more. What if ten are found there?" The LORD said, "I will not destroy it for the ten's sake." The LORD went his way, as soon as he had finished speaking with Abram, and Abram returned to his place.
Now, the two angels who appeared as men came to Sodom at evening, while Lot sat in the gate of Sodom. Lot saw them, and rose up to meet them. He bowed himself with his face to Earth, and he said, "My lords, please turn aside into my house, and stay all night, and wash your feet, then you may rise up early, and go on your way." They said, "No, but we will stay in the street all night."
But he urged them so strongly that they came in with him, and entered into his house. He made them a feast, and baked unleavened bread, and they ate. But before they could lie down to sleep, the men of the city, the men of Sodom, surrounded the house, both young and old, all the people from every quarter. They called to Lot, and said to him, "Where are the men who came in to you this night? Bring them out to us, that we may have sex with them." For these men were not homosexuals, but depraved men who used sex as a tool of violence. They intended to rape these two to death.
Lot went out to them at the entrance, and shut the door behind him. He said, "Please, my brothers, do not act so wickedly. I have two virgin daughters. Please let me bring them out to you, and you may do to them what seems good to you. Only do not do anything to these men, because they have come under the protection of my roof." While Lot did wrong on behalf of his daughters, he did right in regard to the visitors. So the LORD regarded him as righteous to the law.
But they refused to listen. They said, "This one fellow came in to live as a foreigner, and he appoints himself a judge. Now will we deal worse with you, than with them." They pressed Lot out of the way, then moved ahead and drew near to break the door.
But the two visitors opened the door and they struck the men who were at the door of the house with blindness, both small and great, so that they were unable to find the door. Then they pulled Lot inside with them. They asked Lot, "Do you have anybody else here? Sons-in-law, your sons, your daughters, and whoever you have in the city, bring them out of the place. For GOD will destroy this place,

because the outcry against them has grown great before the LORD that he has sent us to seek out if there are even enough righteous for this town to be worth saving." For the LORD had gone to Gomorrah, and found similar results.
So Lot went out and spoke to his sons-in-law, for who were pledged to marry his daughters, and said, "Get up. Get out of this place, for the LORD will destroy the city." But he seemed to his sons-in-law to be joking, and they seemed to care little what happened to his daughters. And Lot concluded they were poor matches this day. When the morning came, the two hurried Lot along, saying, "Get up. Take your wife, and your two daughters who are here, and get out, or you also will die at the hands of the punishment of the city." But he hesitated, so the men grabbed his hand, his wife's hand, and his two daughters' hands. And they took him out, and set him outside of the city. And they said, "Escape for your life. Do not look behind you, and do not stay anywhere in the plain. Escape to the mountains, or you will be destroyed." Lot reasoned to himself, "Oh, surely not so. I have found favor in your sight, and you shown loving kindness in saving my life. How could I escape to the mountain? This city is near to flee to, and it is a little one. Let me escape there and my life will be saved."
They said to him, "The LORD has granted your request concerning this thing also, that I will not overthrow the city of which you have spoken. Hurry, escape there, and you will not be destroyed." Therefore the name of the city was called Zoar. And the sun began to rise when Lot came to Zoar. And behind him, the LORD on Sodom and Gomorrah sent brimstone and fire tossed to the sky from under the ground, for the LORD had caused great upheaval to destroy them. He overthrew those cities, and all the plain, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and that which grew on the ground. And they fled to Zoar, but his wife looked back longingly at the city she had left behind, and she became a pillar of salt.[91]
Abram got up early in the morning to the place where he had stood before the LORD. He looked toward Sodom and Gomorrah, and toward all the land of the plain, and he saw the smoke was rising from the land like smoke from a furnace. When GOD destroyed the cities of the plain, GOD remembered Abram's promise of ten righteous men, when he overthrew the cities in which Lot lived. Lot went up out of Zoar, and lived in the mountain, and his two daughters with him; for he was afraid to live in Zoar. He lived in a cave with his two daughters. And they were in a cave with their father with no man to give them children.
The firstborn said to the younger, "Our father is old, and there is not a man in the land to sleep with us according to the custom of all the land. Come, let's make our father drink wine, and we will sleep with him, that we may preserve our family through our father." They made their father drink wine that night: and the firstborn went in, and slept with her father. And he knew only that an attractive woman slept him, not that it was his daughter. And the next day, he forgot everything. So the firstborn daughter said to her younger sister, "I slept last night with my father. Let us make him drink wine again tonight. You go in, and sleep with him, that we may preserve our family through our father." They made their father drink wine that night also. The younger went and slept with him. And likewise, he did not recognize her as his daughter, and afterward forgot that anything happened. Thus both of Lot's daughters became pregnant by their father, and they became the mothers of the tribes of Moab and Ammon. And when he asked whether anyone from Zoar had made them pregnant, they could not answer.

CHAPTER 6

The word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision, saying, "Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield; your reward will be very great." Abram said, "LORD, what will you give me, seeing I go childless, and the heir of my estate is Eliezer of Damascus? You have given me no offspring, so the one born in my house is my heir." And the word of the LORD came to him, saying, "This man will not be your heir, but

[91] What appeared to happen to Sodom and Gomorrah was that their very soil had been misused, and was basically a volcanic disaster waiting to happen. Lot's wife looking back is a thing that scientists say is believable. Basically, Lot's wife had been lollygagging, not just once but many times, she looked back. This heat would have violently evaporated salt water from the nearby Dead Sea. Effectively, this was steam heated to about 12,000°C, and she was quite a bit behind the others. When that water touched her relatively cold body compared to the water, it would have deposited a layer of salt and anhydrite (calcium sulfate) all over everything it touched, as the liquid exploded into steam. The salt and anhydrite would cool and the steam would continue to evaporate, turning her into a pillar of salt around a human body.

he who will come forth out of your own body will be your heir."
And he brought Abram outside, and said, "Look at the stars, Abram. There are too many stars to count, even if you had time to count them." And he said to him, "So also will your descendants be."
And Abram believed GOD, and it was credited to him as righteousness.
GOD said to him, "I am GOD, who brought you out of Ur Kasdim to give you this land to possess." But he said, "LORD, how can I know that I will possess it?" And GOD said to him, "Bring me a heifer three years old, a female goat three years old, a ram three years old, a turtledove, and a young pigeon." He brought him all of these, divided them in the middle, and placed each half opposite the other (but he did not divide the birds). And birds came to the carcasses for the smell of flesh was strong, but Abram drove them away.
When the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell on Abram. And a terror of great darkness fell on him. And the LORD said to Abram, "Your descendants will live as foreigners in another land. And they will be enslaved there. And they will oppress them. But I will also judge that nation who they will serve. And afterward they will come out with many possessions, and return to this land. But you will go to your fathers in peace. You will be buried in a good old age." When the sun went down, and it was dark, and fire ignited these sacrifices. So it was on that day that the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, "To your descendants I have given this land, from the river of Egypt[92] to the great river of the Euphrates." He also promised Abram, "I will bless those who bless you, and curse those who curse you."[93]
Now Sarai, Abram's wife, bore him no children since she was barren, but she had an Egyptian servant whose name was Hagar. Hagar was rescued from a caravan that was destroyed by thieves, and her family was all killed, so she was an orphan. So Sarai said to Abram, "The LORD has prevented me from bearing. Please go into Hagar. It may be that I will obtain children by her." Abram listened to the voice of Sarai. So Sarai, Abram's wife, took Hagar, after Abram had lived ten years in the land of Canaan, and gave her to Abram her husband to be his mistress. For she had been a child when she was rescued, and now she was an adult. He slept with Hagar, and she conceived. When she saw that she had conceived, his mistress was despised in Sarai's eyes.
Sarai said to Abram, "This wrong is your fault. I gave Hagar into your bosom, and when she saw that she had conceived, she despised me. GOD judge between me and you." But Abram said to Sarai, "Do whatever is good in your sight." And Sarai dealt harshly with her from that time onward. And Hagar bore a son for Abram. And he was named Ishmael, for as Hagar said, "because GOD has heard my affliction," as she was mistreated by Sarai. Abram was eighty-six years old when Hagar bore Ishmael to Abram.

CHAPTER 7

When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the LORD appeared to Abram, and said to him, "I am the LORD. Walk before me, and be blameless. I will make my covenant between me and you, and will multiply you greatly."
Then Abram fell facedown, and GOD talked with him, saying, "As for me, my covenant is with you. You will be the father of a multitude of nations. So will your name will no longer be called Abram, but your name will be Abraham. I will make you exceedingly fruitful, and I will make kings will come out of your line. And I will establish a covenant between me and you, an everlasting covenant, to be GOD to you and to your descendants. I will give to your descendants after you, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession, and I will be their GOD."
GOD said to Abraham, "As for you, this is how you will keep my covenant. Every male among you will be circumcised. You will be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskin. Every male who is eight days old will be circumcised among you, every male whether he is born in the house or bought with money from any foreigner who is not of your descendants. My covenant will be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant. And the uncircumcised male who is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin on the eighth day, that person will be cut off from his people. He has broken my covenant."

---

[92] This part is unclear. The Nile River? The Gulf of Suez? Commonly, the border is considered the Wadi Al-Arish, or Brook of Egypt, that forms Israel's current border. I think this is okay, but their eastern border has yet to be granted.
[93] This part has been granted. People who oppose Israel tend to meet a bad end. Britain lost land and power when it betrayed the Balfour Declaration, Egypt is living in the past, and if America betrays Israel, it has similar bad prognosis.

GOD said also to Abraham, "As for Sarai your wife, you will not call her name Sarai, but her name will be Sarah. And I will bless her, and moreover I will give you a son by her. And I will bless her, and she will be a queen[94] of nations." Then Abraham fell on his face, and laughed, "Will a child be born to him who is one hundred years old? Will Sarah, who is ninety years old, give birth?" Abraham said to GOD, "Oh that Ishmael might live before you." But GOD said, "Truly, Sarah your wife will bear you a son, and you are to name him Isaac. And I will establish my covenant with him as an everlasting covenant and with his descendants after him. As for Ishmael, I have heard you. I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly. He will become the father of twelve princes, and I will make him a great nation. But my covenant I establish with Isaac, who Sarah will bear to you at this set time next year."

When he finished talking with him, GOD went up from Abraham. Abraham took Ishmael his son, all who were born in his house, all who were bought with his money; indeed, very male among the men of Abraham's house, he circumcised the flesh of their foreskin in the same day, as GOD had said to him.

Abraham was ninety-nine years old, when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin. Ishmael, his son, was thirteen years old when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin. In the same day both Abraham and Ishmael, his son, were circumcised.

CHAPTER 8

And GOD appeared to Sarah[95] by the oaks of Mamre, as she sat at the entrance to the tent in the heat of the day. And the LORD disguised herself as a woman, and the two angels became attractive and strong men traveling with her. And Sarah lifted up her eyes and looked, and saw the three visitors stood opposite her. When she saw them, she ran to meet them from the entrance of the tent, and bowed to Earth, and said, "My LORD, if now I have found favor in your sight, please do not go on past me. Now let a little water be brought, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree. I will get a bit of food so you may refresh yourselves. After that you may go your way, now that you have come to me."

Sarah went to the servants of Abraham, and said, "Quickly, get three measures of fine flour, knead it, and make bread." Then she ran to the herd, and took a tender and good calf, and gave it to the servant, and he hurried to prepare it. She also took curds, milk, and the calf that the servant had prepared, and set it before them. She stood by them under the tree, and they ate.

And Abraham had made his way back from meeting the LORD earlier, and recognized her with the two angels. But seeing that Sarah did all this work for those who were only strangers in her eyes, he said nothing, but instead thought to himself, "Who can find a worthy woman? For her price is far above rubies."

And in this an other ways, Sarah showed hospitality, entertaining angels unaware. Then the LORD said, "Sarah, you will have a son." And her eyes were opened, and she knew who it was that was speaking to her. But Sarah asked to be excused, claiming she had to check on something in the other room. And she blushed deeply, and stifled a laugh, imagining herself having the pleasure of a younger woman at such an advanced age. When she collected herself, she returned to the room, only to hear the LORD ask Abraham, "Why did Sarah laugh? Why did she ask if she could really bear a child when she is old? Is anything too difficult for GOD? At the set time I will return to you, and Sarah will have a son."

But Sarah denied it, saying, "I did not laugh," for she was afraid. But the LORD said, "But you did laugh. So your child will be called Isaac." Then the visitors rose up from there, and looked toward Sodom. For this was before Sodom had been destroyed. Abraham went with them to see them on their way.

CHAPTER 9

The LORD visited Sarah as she had said, and the LORD opened Sarah's womb as she had spoken. Sarah

---

[94] Sarah means "queen."

[95] Originally, this chapter centered around Abraham, but it makes more sense that GOD would talk to Abraham then Sarah, than it does that GOD would talk to Abraham twice. So this is an alteration in narrative to make the account flow better. If it bothers you, keep in mind that the original account involved Abraham.

conceived, and bore Abraham a son in his old age. Abraham called their son Isaac. Then Abraham circumcised his son, Isaac, when he was eight days old, as GOD had commanded him.
Abraham was one hundred years old when his son, Isaac, was born to him. So Sarah said, "GOD has made me laugh. Everyone who hears will laugh with me. Who would have said to Abraham, that Sarah would nurse children? For I have borne him a son in his old age."
The child grew, and was weaned. Abraham made a great feast on the day that Isaac was weaned. But Sarah saw Ishmael, the son of Hagar the Egyptian, who she had borne to Abraham, mocking Isaac. So she said to Abraham, "Cast out this slave woman and her son. For the son of this slave woman will not be heir with my son, Isaac." But Abram had grown to love both of his sons, and their mothers. But GOD appeared to Abraham in a dream, "Do not grieve because of the boy, or because of your slave woman. Sarah is your wife, listen to her voice. Isaac will be considered your descendants. As for Ishmael, I have plans also for him." So Abraham rose early that day, then he took a bag of food and a skin of water, and he gave it to Hagar. She tied her supplies on her shoulder and brought Ishmael with her. And she left heading towards the wilderness of Shur,[96] which is near Kadesh, when the water ran out. And Ishmael was thirsty, and he became sick and fell asleep. So she hid his sleeping body in the shrubs, for she did not wish to see her child die.
And she wept loudly. And the LORD heard her.
She[97] said, "Hagar, where did you come from? Where are you going?" But Hagar continued to cry.
GOD called to Hagar from the sky and she said to her, "What troubles you, Hagar? Do not be afraid. For GOD has heard the voice of the boy where he is. Get up, lift up the boy, and hold him by your hand. For I will make him a great nation. I will greatly multiply your descendants, so that they will be too numerous to count. Ishmael's hand will be against every man, and every man's hand against him. And he will live away from all of his brothers."
And GOD opened her eyes, and she saw a source of water. She went and filled the skin with water and gave the boy a drink. She called the name of the LORD who spoke to her, "You are El Roi," for she said, "Here I have seen the one who sees me." Therefore the well was called Beer Lahai Roi.
GOD was with the boy, and he grew. He lived in the wilderness of Paran, and as he grew up, he became an archer. His mother got a wife for him from the land of Egypt.
Meanwhile, a man named Abimelech spoke to Abraham, saying, "GOD is with you in all that you do. Now, therefore, swear to me here by GOD that you will not deal falsely with me, nor with my son, nor with my son's son. But according to the kindness that I have done to you, you will do to me, and to the land in which you have lived as a foreigner." So Abraham swore to Abimelech.
But Abraham complained to Abimelech because of a water well, which Abimelech's servants had violently taken away. Abimelech said, "I do not know who has done this thing. Neither did you tell me, neither did I hear of it, until today."
Abraham took sheep and cattle, and gave them to Abimelech, and the two of them made a covenant. Abraham set seven ewe lambs of the flock by themselves. Abimelech said to Abraham, "What do these seven ewe lambs which you have set by themselves mean?" He said, "You will take these seven ewe lambs from my hand, that it may be a witness to me, that I have dug this well." Therefore he called that place Beersheba, because they both swore there. So they made a covenant at Beersheba, and Abimelech returned into the land of the Philistines.

CHAPTER 10

GOD tempted[98] Abraham, and said to him, "*Abraham... Abraham...*" He said, "Here I am." He said,

---

[96] This, along with the well story below, appear to be repeated episodes that because garbled in sequence through oral tradition. Hagar leaves twice, Abimelech (below) has issues with water twice with both Abraham and Isaac. I decided to merge these episodes into one episode for each. Also, the original text says Hagar is going to Beersheba, but I highly doubt this, because Beersheba is named in the account with Abimelech.
[97] GOD is made in our image. So (whenever possible) when GOD is speaking to a woman, she is a woman. I tried also to do this with Sarah, and other women.
[98] Many people lose faith in the Bible after hearing this passage, equating GOD with an abusive father. But we later learn that the secular world who worshipped Molech and Baal typically sacrificed children. This is a recurring theme, with the pharaoh in Exodus killing firstborn, Herod in the New Testament, and so on. GOD is giving a clear message that he doesn't make humans sacrifice their own people, unlike the Gentiles. JESUS, on the other hand, is a willing sacrifice. That is, GOD made the sacrifice of his own blood that he wasn't willing to allow Abraham to make. Notice that this is a temptation.

"Take your son, Isaac, and go into the land of Moriah. Make there a sacrifice to me."Abraham rose early in the morning, and saddled his donkey, and took Isaac. He split the wood for the burnt offering, and rose up, and went to the place of which GOD had told him. On the third day Abraham lifted up his eyes, and saw the place far off. Abraham tied up the donkey, and Isaac helped Abraham carry the wood of the burnt offering. But seeing that there was no sacrifice, he resolved to sacrifice Isaac his son.[99] He took in his hand the wood and the knife.

Isaac spoke to his father, and said, "My father?" He said, "Here I am, my son." He said, "I see the knife and the wood, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?" Abraham said, "GOD will provide himself the lamb for a burnt offering, my son." So they both went together. They came to the place which GOD had told him of. Abraham built the altar there and arranged the wood, and bound his son Isaac and placed him on the altar, on top of the wood. Abraham reached out his hand, and took the knife to kill his son.

But the LORD called to him out of the sky, "Abraham!" Abraham said, "Here I am." He said, "Do not lay your hand on the boy, neither do anything to him. For I know that you fear GOD." And Abraham looked up and saw a single ram caught in the thicket. The thorns had coiled around its horns almost like a crown, and it had been pierced near its limbs and its side. And Abraham saw it and rejoiced,[100] offering the ram up as a burnt offering instead of his son.

And a fox had also been caught in the thicket, for it was chasing the ram, and its front legs and ears got caught. And it was yelping and making such a fuss that Isaac finally released it, for it was no good as a sacrifice anyway. And Isaac reflected on the fact that he too was almost a sacrifice, and he petted it to calm himself. It seemed pleased, until it suddenly nipped him and ran off.

Abraham called the name of that place Elohim Yireh. As it is said from this day, "GOD will provide."

The Angel of the LORD called to Abraham a second time out of the sky, and said, "I have sworn by myself," says the LORD, "because you have done this thing, and have not withheld even your son, your only one, from me, I will indeed bless you, and I will greatly multiply your offspring like the stars of the sky, and like the sand which is on the seashore; and your offspring will possess the gate of their enemies.

And through your offspring all the nations of Earth will be blessed, because you have obeyed my voice." So Abraham returned to his home with a slightly traumatic Isaac, who was obviously not an emotional mess after his dad almost tried to kill him on behalf of GOD.

CHAPTER 11

Sarah lived one hundred twenty-seven years. Sarah died in Kiriath Arba (also known as Hebron), in the land of Canaan. Abraham came to mourn for Sarah. Abraham rose up and spoke to the sons of Heth, saying, "I am a foreigner living with you. Give me a possession of a burying-place with you, that I may remove my dead for burial."

The sons of Heth answered Abraham, saying to him, "Hear us, my lord. You are a prince of GOD among us. Bury your dead in the best of our tombs. None of us will withhold from you his tomb to prevent you from burying your dead." So Abraham bowed himself to the people of the land.

He talked with them, saying, "If you agree that I may remove my dead for burial, hear me, and approach Ephron the son of Zohar for me, that he may give me the cave of Machpelah, which he owns; it is at the end of his field. For the full price let him give it to me in your presence as a burial place."

Now Ephron was sitting among them. And he answered Abraham, "No, my lord, hear me. I give you the field, and I give you the cave that is in it. In the presence of the sons of my people I give it to you. Bury your dead." Abraham said to Ephron, "Please hear me. I will give the price of the field. Take it from me, and I will bury my dead there."

Ephron answered Abraham, that his land was four hundred shekels of silver, but it didn't matter. But Abraham insisted, and the money changed hands. So the field of Ephron, the field, the cave which was in the field, and all the trees in the field, that were in all of its borders, were deeded to Abraham as a possession in the presence of the sons of Heth, before all who went in at the gate of his city. After

---

[99] I altered the text here. I do not believe GOD commanded this, but that Abraham lost patience, and took matters into his own hands.

[100] I never understood when JESUS said, "Abraham saw me before he died and rejoiced." This is the passage he means.

this, Abraham buried Sarah his wife in the cave of the field, in the land of Canaan.

CHAPTER 12

Now Abraham was old, and well advanced in years. The LORD had blessed Abraham in all things. But Abraham worried for his son, because he was quiet and withdrawn after almost being sacrificed. So he wanted him to find a wife so that his line would not die with Isaac.

So he said to Isaac,[101] "Swear that you will not take a wife from the daughters of Canaan, where we live. Isaac, go to my country and find a woman from my relatives. Then you will bring her back to this land, for the LORD, the GOD of Heaven, swore to me, saying, 'I will give this land to your offspring.' He will send his angel before you, and you will take a wife from there."

Isaac took ten camels and departed. He arose, and went to Aram Naharaim, to the city of Nahor. And he covered himself in a cloak so he could investigate the land. Now it was hot, and he was thirsty, and his camels also appeared to need a drink. So he prayed silently, "O LORD, the GOD of my father Abraham, please give me success this day, and show kindness to me. I am standing by the spring of water, and many of the daughters of the men of the city are coming out to draw water. Let me meet the one that I am to marry, and let her be known by this sign. I will ask these women, 'Please let down your pitcher, that I may drink,' and if she is not for me, she will ignore me or offer water only for me. But if she the one who you have appointed to be my bride, let her also tell me, 'Drink and I will give your camels a drink.'"

No sooner had he finished his prayer than Rebekah came out, his relative through Nahor's family, with her pitcher on her shoulder. The young woman was very beautiful to look at, and she was a virgin. She went down to the spring, filled her pitcher, and came up. And Isaac asked her, "Please give me a drink, a little water from your pitcher." She said, "Drink, my lord." She hurried, and let down her pitcher, and gave him a drink. When she had finished giving him drink, she said, "I will also draw for your camels, until they have finished drinking." She hurried, and emptied her pitcher into the trough, and ran again to the well to draw, and drew for all his camels. And she continued to draw water until all camels were satisfied. And he gave her a bracelet on her hands.[102] So Isaac asked her, "Whose daughter are you? Please tell me. Is there room in your father's house for us to lodge in?" She said to him, "I am the daughter of Bethuel the son of Milcah, who she bore to Nahor. By all means stay, we have plenty of straw and feed, and room to lodge in."

Rebekah had a brother, and his name was Laban. Laban ran out to the man, to the spring. When he saw the bracelets on his sister's hands, and when he heard the words of Rebekah, he came to Isaac. Isaac was standing by the camels at the spring. Laban said, "Come in, why do you stand outside? For I have prepared the house, and room for the camels." So Isaac came into the house, and he unloaded the camels. He gave straw and feed for the camels, and water to wash his feet and the feet of the men who were with him.

Food was set before him to eat, but he said, "I will not eat until I have told my message." He said, "Speak on." He said, "I am Abraham's son. The LORD has blessed my father greatly. He has become great. He has given him herds of many animals, silver and gold, and many camels. Sarah, my mother, bore me when she was old. He has given all that he has to him. And he told me that I should not take a wife from the land he lives in, but to go to the land of my relatives and take a wife there. Now if you will deal kindly and truly with my me, let me know whether I may turn to the right hand, or to the left."[103]

So Laban told him, "As this thing comes from the LORD, we can speak either way. There is Rebekah, let her decide whether to stay with us or go with you. If she goes, let her be your wife, as the LORD has spoken." And Isaac bowed himself down to Earth to the LORD, and brought out silver gold jewelry, and clothing, and gave them to Rebekah. He also gave valuable gifts to her brother and her mother. Then they ate and drank, he and the men who were with him, and stayed all night. They rose up in the morning, and he said, "Let me return home." But they said, "Let Rebekah stay a few more days, at

---

[101] Originally, he said all this to a servant. But doing things through intermediaries is clunky writing, unless you can prove it really went down that way.

[102] After this, there is a whole sequence about putting a gold ring on her nose. I guess it meant betrothal in those days but to my sensibilities, it feels like slave trading.

[103] Hahahahaha, swipe right or left!

least ten. After that, she will go." But Isaac objected for he wished to return to his home. So finally they called Rebekah and asked her, "Will you go with this man?" She said, "I will go." So Isaac and Rebekah rode on a camel together, while followed on other camels by her nurse, and their servants. And they blessed her as she left.

Abraham went out in the field at the evening. He lifted up his eyes, and saw, and, there were camels coming, "Who is the man who is walking in the field to meet us?" And he saw Isaac and Rebekah on a camel, and said, "Here at last is a wife for my son." And Isaac brought her into his mother Sarah's tent, and took Rebekah, and she became his wife. And he loved her. Isaac was comforted after his mother's death.

CHAPTER 13

Abraham lived to be one hundred seventy-five years, then he breathed his last, and died in a good old age. And his people gathered to mourn him. Ishmael returned to Isaac when he heard his father had died. And his sons buried him in the cave in the field of Ephron, with his wife Sarah.

There was a famine in the land, besides the first famine that was in the days of Abraham. Isaac went to Abimelech king of the Philistines, to Gerar. The LORD appeared to him, and said, "Do not go down into Egypt. Live in the land I will tell you about. Sojourn in this land, and I will be with you, and will bless you. For to you, and to your descendants, I will give all these lands, and I will establish the oath which I swore to Abraham your father. I will multiply your descendants as the stars of the sky, and will give to your descendants all these lands, and by your descendants will all the nations of Earth be blessed, because Abraham obeyed my voice, and kept my requirements, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws." So Isaac settled in Gerar.[104]

After the death of Abraham, GOD blessed Isaac, his son. Isaac prayed to the LORD for his wife, because she was barren. The LORD was moved by his prayer, and Rebekah his wife conceived. But she felt great pain, and she asked the LORD, "If all is well, why am I like this?" The LORD said to her, "Two nations are in your womb. Two peoples will be separated from your body. The one people will be stronger than the other people. The elder will serve the younger."

When the time came for her to give birth, the twins in her womb exited in this way. The first came out red all over, like a hairy garment. They named him Esau. After that, his brother came out, and his hand had hold on Esau's heel. He was named Jacob. Isaac was sixty years old when she bore them. Time passed, and the boys grew. Esau was a skillful hunter, a man of the field. Jacob was a quiet man, living in tents.

And Isaac loved Esau, because he ate his venison, but Rebekah loved Jacob, because Jacob was helpful around the home.

Now Jacob was cooking stew, and Esau came in from the field, and he was famished. Esau said to Jacob, "Please feed me with that same red stew, for I am famished." Therefore his name was called Edom. Jacob said, "First, sell me your birthright." He said this not of his own accord, but because his mother desired the prophecy that she had received to come true. Even so, he cooperated with her plan.

Esau said, "I am so hungry, I am about to die. What good is the birthright to me?" So Jacob said, "Swear to me first." So he swore to him, and he sold his birthright to Jacob. Then Jacob gave Esau bread and stew of red lentils. He ate and drank, rose up, and went his way. So Esau despised his birthright, valuing it less than a day's hunger.

When Esau was forty years old, he married two Judith and Basemath, the daughters of the Hethites. They brought grief to Isaac and Rebekah. And Rebekah disliked Esau's position as firstborn. Now, Esau had given his birthright, but there were no witnesses to this transaction, so Esau would deny it. So when, Isaac became old, and his eyesight was failing so that he could not see, Rebekah schemed to have his inheritance cut away from him. Isaac his elder son Esau, "My son?" He said to him, "Here I am." He said, "I am old now. I do not know the day of my death. Now therefore, please take your weapons, your quiver and your bow, and go out to the field, and hunt down a wild animal for me. Make me the tasty food that I love and bring it to me to eat, so that I may bless you before I die."

---

[104] This section has a repeat of Abraham and Sarah with Isaac and Rebekah, pretending someone is a sister. It also has a retelling of a water feud. Either it's error text from oral repeating, or Abimelech is guilty of breaking a promise made with his father. I also reorganized this, because it is effectively interrupting the story.

Rebekah overheard when Isaac spoke to Esau his son from the outside of the tents. So while Esau went out to the field to hunt for a wild animal and bring it back, Rebekah spoke to Jacob her son, "I heard your father speak to Esau your brother, asking him to bring wild food that he may eat it and bless Esau in the presence of the LORD before his death. My son, obey my voice. Go now to the flock, and get me from there two choice young goats. I will prepare them in a tasty way for your father, the way he likes it. You will bring it to your father, that he may eat, so that he may bless you before his death." So the goat was seasoned with spices to give it a strong taste like the wild animals that Esau liked to hunt.

But Jacob was skeptical, "This will never work! Esau my brother is a hairy man, and I am a smooth man," he said to his mother, "What if my father touches me? I will seem to him as a deceiver, and I would bring a curse on myself, and not a blessing."

His mother said to him, "Let me me worry about that! If you fail, your curse will be on me, my son. Anyway, go get them for me. I will take care of the details." So he went and got them, and his mother prepared some tasty food, just the way his father liked it. Then Rebekah took the clothes of Esau, her elder son, which were with her in the house, and put them on Jacob, her younger son. They were covered in his sweat, and smelled strongly of him. And the skinned the goats and put these skins on his hands and near his neck. And she handed the tasty food and the bread which she had prepared to her son Jacob.

Jacob came to his father, and said, "My father?" He said, "Here I am. Who are you, my son?" Jacob said to his father, "I am the one who has your birthright. I have done what you asked me to do. Please sit up and eat what I hunted so that you can bless me." Isaac questioned his son, "How is it that you have found it so quickly, my son?" He said, "The LORD your GOD gave me cunning in my hunt."

So Isaac said to Jacob, "Please come near, that I may feel you, my son, whether you are really my son Esau or not." Isaac felt him, and said, "Strange. The voice is Jacob's voice, but the hands are the hands of Esau." He did not recognize him, because his hands were hairy like those of his brother Esau. He asked, "Are you really my son, who has my birthright?" He said, "I am."[105]

He said, "Bring the meal near to me, and I will eat of what my son brought so that I can bless you." He brought it near to him, and he ate. The dish was a goat cooked in garlic and the fat of the animal, with spices and wild herbs. He brought him wine, and he drank.

His father Isaac said to him, "Come near now, and kiss me, my son." Jacob came near, and kissed him, and Isaac smelled the scent of his clothing, and blessed him, "The scent of my son is as the scent of a field which the LORD has blessed. GOD give you of the dew of the sky, of the fatness of Earth, and plenty of grain and new wine. Let peoples serve you, and nations bow down to you. Let your mother's sons bow down to you. Cursed be everyone who curses you. Blessed be everyone who blesses you." As soon as Isaac had finished blessing Jacob, Jacob left the presence of Isaac his father.

Then Esau his brother came in from his hunting. He had killed wild animals, and cooked them with their own fat, but they did not need herbs, for the already tasted of wild game. He also brought this tasty food to his father. He said to his father, "Let my father get up and eat of what his son caught, so that you may bless me." But Isaac said to him, "Who are you?" He said, "I am your son, Esau."

Isaac trembled violently, and said, "Who was it then that hunted an animal and brought it to me, and I ate it all before you came? I have already given him your blessing." When Esau heard the words of his father, he cried out loudly and bitterly, and said to his father, "Bless me, even me also, my father."

Isaac said, "Your brother came with deceit, and has taken away your blessing. I do not have a second blessing to give!"

Esau admitted, "He has taken what should have been mine these two times. He took away my birthright, and now he has taken away my blessing. It is right that you call him Jacob, for he has grabbed what should have been mine." He said, "Are you certain that you do not have a blessing for me?"

Isaac answered Esau, "I have blessed him with prosperity of grain and new wine. What then can I do for you, my son?"

Esau said to his father, "Have you but one blessing? Bless me also, my father. Anything will do." Esau

[105] I'm playing on the birthright part, because the firstborn should have the birthright, unless it was traded away.

lifted up his voice, and wept. So Isaac answered him, "I bless you with strength, then, my son. You will live under the sky, and by your sword. And you will serve your brother. But you will shake his yoke from off your neck." And after this blessing, his father died.
Esau hated Jacob because of the blessing with which his father blessed him, and because he blamed his father's death on Jacob. Esau mourned for a short time, saying, "The days of mourning are about over. Soon, I will kill my brother Jacob." Rebekah overheard these words and said to Jacob, "Your brother Esau is planning to kill you. You must run to your relative Laban, my brother in Haran. You may stay with him a few days, at least until your brother's fury turns away. I will try to calm him down. When your brother's anger against you subsides and he forgets what you have done to him, I will send for you and get you from there. Why should I lose both of you in one day?"
Rebekah said to Jacob, "I loathe my life because of the daughters of Heth. If you take a wife from them, like Esau, what good is my life?" Nor was he to take daughters from the tribes of Canaan.
So Jacob went out from Beersheba, and went toward Haran.

CHAPTER 14

Now Jacob traveled through the wilderness on the way to Haran, and he stopped to rest when the sun had set. For he was very drowsy. And he had a dream where there was a stairway from Earth all the way up to Heaven. And the angels of GOD were ascending and descending on it. And the LORD stood above the staircase, and said, "I am the GOD of Abraham your grandfather, and the GOD of Isaac your father. The land on which you are lying I will give to you and to your descendants. And through you and your descendants, all the families of Earth be blessed. I am with you, and will watch over you wherever you go, and will bring you again into this land. For I will not leave you, until I have done that which I have spoken of to you." Then Jacob woke up from his sleep, and said, "Surely the LORD is in this place, and I did not know it." He was afraid, and said, "How awesome is this place. This is none other than GOD's house, and this is the gate of Heaven." So Jacob rose up early in the morning, and took the stone that he had put under his head, and set it up as a standing-stone, and poured oil on top of it. He called the name of that place Bethel, though previously the city was named Luz.
Then Jacob made a vow, saying, "If GOD will be with me and will watch over me on this journey I am taking, so that I return to my father's house safely, then the LORD will be my GOD. Of all that you will give me, I will surely give the tenth to you."

CHAPTER 15

Then Jacob finished his journey, and he looked and saw a well in the field, and three flocks of sheep lying there by it. And out of that well, they watered the flocks. The stone on the well's mouth was large, and when all the flocks would be gathered there, they would roll the stone from the well's mouth. And after they watered the sheep, they would put the stone again on the well's mouth in its place.
When Jacob found out it was the town of Haran, he asked the people there about Laban. He said to them, "Is he well?" They said, "It is well. See, Rachel, his daughter, is coming with the sheep." While he was yet speaking with them, Rachel came with her father's sheep, for she was tending them.
It happened, when Jacob saw Rachel the daughter of Laban, his mother's brother, and the sheep of Laban, his mother's brother, that Jacob went over and rolled the stone from the well's mouth and watered the flock of Laban his mother's brother. Jacob kissed Rachel, and wept loudly. Jacob told Rachel that he was her father's brother, and that he was Rebekah's son. She ran and told her father.
And Jacob decided that he would stay longer than a few days.

CHAPTER 16

When Laban heard the news of Jacob, his sister's son, that he ran to meet Jacob, and embraced him, and kissed him, and brought him to his house. Jacob told Laban all these things. Laban said to him, "Surely you are my bone and my flesh." He lived with him for a month.
Laban said to Jacob, "Because you are my brother, should you therefore serve me for nothing? Tell me what your wages should be?" Laban had two daughters. The name of the older was Leah, and the name of the younger was Rachel. Leah's eyes were bland, but Rachel was beautiful in form and appearance. And she had beautiful and intense eyes that Jacob loved. Jacob said, "I will serve you seven years for Rachel, your younger daughter."
Laban said, "It is better that I give her to you, than that I should give her to another man. Stay with

me." Jacob served seven years for Rachel, and it seemed only a few days to him because of his love for her. Jacob said to Laban, "Give me my wife, for my time is completed, so that I may sleep with her."
Laban gathered together all the people of the place, and gave a feast. And Laban got Jacob very drunk, so he could not recognize anyone. Then Laban took Leah his daughter and brought her to him, and he slept with her. In the morning, Jacob realized it was Leah. He said to Laban, "What is this you have done to me? Did I not work for you to have Rachel? Why then have you deceived me?"
Laban said, "It is not our custom here to give the younger before the firstborn. I will give you the other also in exchange for the work which you are to serve with me for another seven years." But this was not the true reason. Jacob had cheated his brother of his inheritance, and the LORD arranged that Laban teach Jacob what it felt like to be cheated. But the reason Laban went along with this was that he had learned by divination that GOD would bless him through this means, and he understood that he could get fourteen years or more from Jacob, instead of only seven.
Even so, Jacob did so, and fulfilled her week of years. So Laban gave him Rachel his daughter as wife. So he slept with Rachel also, and he loved Rachel more than Leah. And he worked with him another seven years. The LORD saw that Leah was unloved, so he made her fertile, but Rachel was barren. Leah bore a son, and she named him Reuben. She bore another son, and named him Simeon. She conceived again, and bore a third son. Therefore he was named Levi. After this, bore another son. She named him Judah. Then she stopped bearing.
When Rachel saw that she was not bearing Jacob any children, Rachel envied her sister. She said to Jacob, "Give me children, or else I will die." But Jacob became very angry with Rachel, and he said, "Am I in GOD'S place, who has withheld from you the fruit of the womb?" So she said, "Sleep with Bilhah, so that she will bear children for me, that I too may have children through her." So she gave him her handmaid Bilhah as a mistress, and Jacob slept with her. Bilhah conceived, and bore Jacob a son. Rachel called his name Dan.[106] Bilhah, Rachel's handmaid, conceived again, and bore Jacob a second son. Rachel named him Naphtali.
But when Leah saw that she had stopped bearing, she took Zilpah and gave her to Jacob as a wife. Zilpah, Leah's handmaid, bore Jacob a son. She named him Gad. Zilpah bore Jacob a second son. So she named him Asher.
Reuben went out during the wheat harvest and found three mandrakes in the field, and brought them to his mother, Leah. Rachel said to Leah, "Please share some of your son's mandrakes." But Leah said to her, "Is it a small matter that you have taken away my husband? Would you take away my son's mandrakes, also?" Jacob had come from the field in the evening, and Leah went out to meet him, and said, "You must sleep with me, for I have been given my son's mandrakes." So he slept with her that night. GOD allowed the mandrakes to work for Leah, and she conceived, and bore Jacob a fifth son. So she named him Issachar. Leah conceived again, and bore a sixth son to Jacob. So she named him Zebulun. Afterwards, she bore a daughter, and named her Dinah.
Now mandrakes are a plant in the nightshade family that had roots which resembled a human body, and were esteemed for opening the womb. For GOD had created all things, including plants for the aid of sexual fertility. And Rachel sought out mandrakes herself, but her womb remained closed, and made her ill. For mandrakes only worked with GOD's blessing, and was actually kinda sorta poisonous. For years, she took it without any success. At last, Rachel cried out to GOD, because she continued to be barren. Then GOD remembered Rachel, and GOD listened to her, and made her fertile. She conceived, bore a son, and said, "GOD has at last taken away my shame." So she named him Joseph.

CHAPTER 17

After Rachel had borne Joseph, Jacob said to Laban, "Now I wish to go to my own place, and to my country. Let me take my wives and my children for who I have served you, and let me go; for you know the service I have given you."
But Laban said to him, "If now I have found favor in your eyes, stay here, for I have learned by divination that GOD has blessed me for your sake." Jacob said, "Name your wages, and I will pay it."

---

[106] Because of a Find and Replace error removing all instances of Dan (it was the abbreviation for Daniel, and I wanted to remove chapters and verses), Dan's name is often missing from the text. Yes, I'm annoyed about this. There are probably similar text errors. I need an editor in the worst way.

So Jacob said to him, "You know how I have served you, and how well your livestock have done with me. For you had little before I came, and it has increased abundantly. And GOD has blessed you wherever I worked, but how will I also provide food for my own household?"
Laban asked, "What should I give you?" Jacob said, "You do not need to give me anything. If you will do this one thing for me, I will again pasture your flock and take care of it. I will pass through all your flock today, removing from there every speckled and spotted one, and every black one among the sheep, and the spotted and speckled among the goats. This will be my wages. So my honesty will testify for me later on, when the subject of my wages comes before you. Every one that is not speckled and spotted among the goats, and black among the sheep that I have in my possession, will be counted as stolen."
So Laban said, "Let it be as you have said." That day, Laban removed the male goats that were streaked and spotted, and all the female goats that were speckled and spotted, every one that had white in it, and all the black ones among the sheep, and put them in the care of his sons. He then moved his sons a three day's journey away, so Jacob found only sheep without any oddity.
But if Laban was crafty, Jacob was clever. And the LORD blesses cleverness. Jacob took fresh branches from poplar, almond and plane trees and made white streaks by peeling them, exposing white stripes on the branches. He set up the peeled branches which he had peeled opposite the flocks in the troughs, that is, the watering places where the flocks came to drink. And since they bred when they came to drink, the flocks bred in front of the branches, and the flocks brought mixes that bore streaks, speckles, and spots. Jacob separated the lambs, and made the flocks face toward the streaked and all the black in the flock of Laban. So he kept his own flocks separate, and did not put them into Laban's flock. So the weaker flock would be Laban's, and the stronger Jacob's.
Thus Jacob became very rich, and had large flocks, camels, and donkeys. He heard the words of Laban's sons, saying, "Jacob has taken away all that was our father's. From that which was our father's, he has gained all this wealth." Jacob saw the expression on Laban's face fall. The LORD said to Jacob, "Return to the land of your fathers, and to your relatives, and I will be with you."
Jacob sent and called Rachel and Leah to the field where his flock was, and said to them, "I see your father's face has fallen. But the GOD of my father has been with me. You know that I have served your father with all of my strength. Yet your father has cheated me and changed my wages many times, but GOD did not allow him to hurt me. For my GOD is the GOD of Bethel, where I anointed a standing-stone, and made a vow. Now arise, let us go out from this land and return to the land of my birth."
Rachel and Leah answered him, "Is there yet any portion or inheritance for us in our father's house? Aren't we regarded by him as foreigners? For he has sold us, and he has used up what was paid for us. For all the wealth which GOD has taken away from our father, that is ours and our children's. Whatever GOD has said to you, let it be done." So Jacob left with his sons and his wives on the camels, and he took away all his livestock and all his property to return to his father's land in the land of Canaan.
Laban was told on the third day that Jacob had fled. He took his relatives with him, and pursued after him for seven days, and caught up with him in the hill country of Gilead. But GOD came to Laban the Aramean in a dream at night, and said to him, "Be careful that you do not speak to Jacob either good or bad." Laban caught up with Jacob. Now Jacob had pitched his tent in the hill country, and Laban with his relatives camped in the hill country of Gilead.
Laban said to Jacob, "What have you done? Why have you carried away my daughters like captives taken in war? Why did you flee in secret? I might have sent you away with joy and singing, with a tambourine and with a lyre. And you did not allow me to kiss my sons and my daughters? Now you have done foolishly. It is in my power to do you harm, but the GOD of your father spoke to me last night, saying, 'Be careful that you do not speak to Jacob either good or bad.' Now you have indeed gone away, because you longed greatly for your father's house, but why have you left in such a way?"[107]
Jacob answered Laban, "Because I was afraid, for I thought that you would take your daughters from me by force.'"
She said to her father, "Do not let my lord be angry that I can't rise up before you; for the manner of

[107] There's a section about stolen idols. But I think that idols are not relevant, so I'm gonna keep it that way. It also adds a significant amount of words spent searching.

women is on me." For she had hidden some of Laban's precious things. Jacob was angry, and argued with Laban, "What is my trespass? What is my sin, that you have hotly pursued after me? Now that you have searched around in all my stuff, did you find anything from all of your household's belongings? These twenty years I have been with you. Your ewes and your female goats have not miscarried their young, and I haven't eaten the rams of your flocks. That which was torn by animals I did not bring to you. I bore its loss. You demanded payment from me regardless. Unless the GOD of my father, the GOD of Abraham, and the one who Isaac fears, had been with me, surely now you would have sent me away empty-handed. GOD has seen my harsh treatment and my hard work, and rebuked you last night."

Laban answered Jacob, "The daughters are my daughters, the children are my children, the flocks are my flocks, and all that you see is mine. But what can I do in the face of my own sins? So let us make a covenant, you and I. There is only GOD as witness between me and you."

Jacob took a stone and set it up as a standing-stone. Jacob said to his relatives, "Gather stones." So they took stones and made a mound. They ate there by the mound. Laban said, "This mound is a witness between me and you today." Therefore it was named Galeed and Mizpah, for he said, "GOD watch between me and you, when we are absent one from another. If you mistreat my daughters, or if you take wives besides my daughters, GOD is witness between me and you." Then Jacob and Laban swore.

Jacob offered a sacrifice on the mountain, and called his relatives to eat the meal. They ate the meal and stayed all night on the mountain. Early in the morning, Laban rose up, and kissed his sons and his daughters, and blessed them. Laban departed and returned to his place.

CHAPTER 18

One day, Dinah went to visit some of the Canaanite women, but the chief of that region raped her. While Jacob wanted to do nothing because his tribe was still small, her brothers decided that to let this sort of thing stand would reduce her to a common whore, so a war was fought on her account. She was given a *choice* whether or not to marry him, but he had no such choice to refuse. She said, "My heart and my womb cry out for justice. He will be my husband, and in the years to come, he will know in what way he wronged me."[108] So she took him as her husband, that he might suffer justice for his actions.

Jacob went on his way, and messengers of GOD came to Jacob, saying, "We saw your brother Esau. He comes to meet you, and four hundred men with him." Then Jacob was very afraid and was distressed. He divided the people and hi flocks, and the herds, and the camels, into two camps, for he reasoned, "If Esau comes to the one camp, and strikes it, then the other camp will escape."

Jacob said, "GOD of my father Abraham, and GOD of my father Isaac, I am not worthy of the least of all the loving kindnesses and of all the faithfulness which you have shown to me. Please deliver me from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau. For I fear that he will come and attack me and the mothers with the children."

So he spent the night there and selected from what he had acquired a present for his brother Esau, two hundred female goats and twenty male goats, two hundred ewes and twenty rams, thirty milk camels with their young, forty cows, ten bulls, twenty female donkeys and ten male donkeys. And he sent his servants ahead with these, telling them to keep some distance from him. And these were delivered to Esau as a present to ensure peace, but they were distant, in case Esau decided instead to attack. He also instructed a second and third group to do the same, hoping to appease his brother.

Then he got up that night and took his two wives along with Bilhah and Zilpah, and he took his eleven sons and crossed over the ford of the Jabbok. He took them and sent them across the stream, and sent over all his possessions.

Then Jacob was left alone. And a man[109] wrestled with him until the rising of the dawn. And the man was dressed in an odd way, wearing a hood over his head, with his chest bound with bandages, and

---

[108] This is a slightly feminist retake, but the point of a later law hinges on the marriage of those who raped you, and whether or not the woman has a choice.

[109] Jews say that JESUS does not appear in the Old Testament, but this is not true. In this verse, it clearly mentions a man, yet later he tells him that he has wrestled with GOD (and with man). He also refuses to give his name. The Jewish people also brush over the idea of grace in favor of the law, even though many of the patriarchs did dishonorable things.

long pants and sleeves covering his arms and legs, so very little in distinguishing features could be determined.[110]
When he saw that he did not defeat him, he struck the socket of his hip, and Jacob's hip was dislocated as he wrestled with him. Then he said, "Let me go, for the dawn is breaking." But Jacob said, "I won't let you go unless you bless me." And the man said to him, "What is your name?" He said, "Jacob." Then he said, "Your name will no longer be called Jacob, but Israel, because you have struggled with GOD and with men and have prevailed."
And Jacob said to himself, "What manner of man tells me that I have wrestled with GOD?" So then Jacob asked him, "Please tell me your name." But he said, "Why is it that you ask what my name is?" And he blessed him there. So Jacob called the name of the place Peniel: "For I have seen GOD face to face, and my life has been preserved."
The sun rose on him as he passed by Peniel, and he limped because of his hip. Therefore, from this day onward, the children of Israel do not eat meat from the tendon of the hip socket, because GOD struck Jacob's hip socket near that tendon.

CHAPTER 19

Now Jacob looked up and saw that Esau approaching, and with him four hundred men. He divided the children between Leah, Rachel, and the Bilhah and Zilpah. He put Bilhah and Zilpah and their children in front, Leah and her children after, and Rachel and Joseph last.[111]
He went on ahead of them, and bowed himself to the ground seven times, as he approached his brother. Esau ran to meet him, embraced him, hugged his neck, and kissed him. And they wept. And he looked up and saw the women and the children, and said, "Who are these with you?" He said, "The children who GOD has graciously given me."
Then Bilhah and Zilpah came forward with their children, and they bowed themselves. Leah also and her children came forward, and bowed themselves. After them, Joseph came forward with Rachel, and they bowed themselves. Esau said, "What do you mean by all this company which I met?" Jacob said, "To find favor in the sight of my lord."
But Esau said, "Bah! I have enough, my brother; keep what you have for yourself." Jacob said, "No, please, if I have now found no favor in your sight, then accept my present from my hand, because I have seen your face, which is like seeing the face of GOD, since you have accepted me. Please take the gift that I brought to you, because GOD has been gracious to me, and because I have enough." Thus he urged him, and he took it.
So Esau returned that day on the road to Seir. But Jacob traveled to Succoth, and he built himself a house, and made shelters for his livestock. Therefore the name of the place is called Succoth. After that, he arrived safely at the city of Shechem, which is in the land of Canaan, and camped near the city. He purchased the parcel of land where he had pitched his tent, from the sons of Hamor, Shechem's father, for a hundred *kesitah*.[112] He erected an altar there and called it El Elohe Israel.
Then GOD said to Jacob, "Arise, go up to Bethel, and live there. Make an altar there to GOD, who appeared to you when you fled from your brother Esau." Then Jacob said to his household and to all who were with him, "Let us arise and go up to Bethel, and I will make an altar there to GOD, who answered me in the day of my distress, and has been with me wherever I went." Then they set out, and Jacob came to Luz (that is, Bethel), which is in the land of Canaan, he and all the people who were with him. He built an altar there, and called the place Bethel, because there GOD had revealed himself to him when he was fleeing from his brother.
And GOD said to him, "I am the LORD. Be fruitful and multiply. A nation and a company of nations will come from you, and kings will come from your body. The land which I gave to Abraham and Isaac, I will give to you, and I will give the land to your descendants after you." Then GOD went up from him in the place where he spoke with him. And Jacob set up a standing-stone in the place where he spoke with him, a pillar of stone. And he poured out a drink offering on it, and poured oil on it.
Then they set out from Bethel. There was still some distance to come to Ephrath, and Rachel went

---

[110] The "man" is perfectly between sex and age, in that they could be a child or an adult, a man or a woman.
[111] Some definite favoritism going on here.
[112] Or "lambs." Apparently here, this is a coin cast in the shape of a lamb, rather than an actual lamb. At this time, currency was more about weight.

into labor, and her labor was difficult. When she was in the difficult labor, the midwife said to her, "Do not be afraid, for now you have another son." It happened, as her life was departing (for she died), that she named him Ben-Oni, but his father had a brighter view, and named him Benjamin.[113] So Rachel died and was buried near Bethlehem. Jacob set up a standing-stone on her grave. It is the standing-stone of Rachel's grave even to this day.

So Jacob came to his father's land at Mamre in Kiriath Arba (which is Hebron), where Abraham and Isaac had sojourned. And Esau and Jacob marked their father Isaac's grave.

Esau took his wives, his sons, his daughters, and all the people of his household, with his livestock, all his animals, and all of the property he had acquired in the land of Canaan, and went out from the land of Canaan away from the presence of his brother Jacob. For their possessions were too great for them to remain together, and the land in which they were traveling could not support them because of their livestock.

CHAPTER 20

Jacob lived in the land where his father had sojourned, in the land of Canaan. Now Jacob (or Israel as he became known) loved Joseph more than all his children, because he had been born to him from Rachel, who he had loved deeply. And he made a long ornamented robe for him, woven in many colors.

But his brothers saw that their father loved him more than all his brothers, and they resented him from jealousy. To make things worse, the LORD also blessed him with gifts that they did not have. For he could dream and interpret dreams. And one night, Joseph had a dream, and when he told it to his brothers, they hated him even more. Because he told them, "Please listen to this dream I had. And we were binding sheaves in the field, and my sheaf arose and also stood upright. And your sheaves gathered around it and bowed down to my sheaf."

Then his brothers said to him, "Will you indeed reign over us?" And he had another dream, and he said, "My second dream, the sun and the moon and eleven stars bowed down to me." This dream made them even more upset, because it implied not only they but also their mother and father would bow before him.

So one day, Joseph's father sent him away to check on his brothers who were in the field supposed to be watching the sheep. And they saw him coming in the distance, and they said, "Look, the dreamer is coming!" And they plotted to kill him.

But Reuben wanted to deliver him out of their hands, to restore him to his father. So he told them, "Let us not shed any blood. Instead, throw him into this well." And they stripped off his robe, and tossed him down. And the people of Ishmael from the land of Midian were heading to Egypt by caravan, and were trading spices. So the brothers came up with an idea to sell Joseph and make some money, while also getting rid of him. So they sold him for twenty shekels.[114] And these brought Joseph to Egypt. Next they killed an animal in his place (a male goat), and they dipped the robe in its blood they tore it. They showed it to their father, and he became convinced that a vicious animal attacked him. So Jacob tore his clothes and put on sackcloth, and mourned for many days. And his sons tried to console him without avail.

Meanwhile, the traders from Midian sold him into Egypt to Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh.

CHAPTER 21

Now Joseph was brought down to Egypt, and Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh's, the captain of the guard, an Egyptian, bought him from the Ishmaelites who had brought him down there. And the LORD was with Joseph, and he became a successful man. And his master saw that the LORD was with him, and that the LORD made everything that he did to succeed in his hands.

So Joseph found favor in the sight of his master, and he made him overseer of his house, and all that he had he put under his authority. Likewise, the LORD blessed the Egyptian's house because of Joseph, and the blessing of the LORD was on all that he had, both in the house and the field.

But Potiphar's wife saw the talented slave Joseph, and told him to sleep with her. But he refused, for

---

[113] Ben-Oni means "Son of my sorrow," for she felt deep sorrow in her infertility. The mandrakes she had taken slowly poisoned her to death. Benjamin means "Son of my right hand." Jacob loved his wife, and saw her as his best friend. So in some sense, the fact that she died didn't matter, as she lived on in her sons.

[114] Shekels are not coins at this time. They are silver based on weight. Twenty shekels is enough silver to make half a pound.

he was a principled man. He told her to stop trying this, but she persisted. But she grabbed his clothing and stripped him naked. She went to Potiphar and insisted that Joseph had tried to sleep with her. Potiphar didn't know who to trust, but his wife insisted that accusations should always be believed, and as his wife, she should always trust her first, or he didn't love her.[115] Even though Potiphar thought Joseph to be a hardworking and decent man, he had no choice. And so, Joseph was thrown into prison.

But the LORD was with Joseph and showed him kindness and gave him favor in the sight of the keeper of the prison. So the guard made sure that Joseph was not mistreated while in prison.

While Joseph was in prison, Pharaoh became angry with his cupbearer and his baker. And each of them had dreams that they didn't understand. And the LORD had given Joseph the gift of interpreting dreams, so he heard the baker's dream about baskets stacked and being eaten by birds and told him the basket represented his head, and that the birds were crows feeding. Within three days Pharaoh would impale the baker on a pole, and the birds will eat his flesh. As for the cupbearer, there was vine with three branches and they ripened, and his cup was in Pharaoh's hand squeezing the grapes into the cup. Joseph said this meant that Pharaoh would give him his position back in three days.

Joseph told him, "Please remember me when your dreams come true!" But the baker died, and the cupbearer forgot. So Joseph was in prison for two years.

CHAPTER 22

Pharaoh had two dreams every night, and every night he woke screaming. And he wondered what it meant, so he summoned all of Egypt's priests and wise men. And Pharaoh told them his dreams, but there was no one who could interpret them to Pharaoh. And it greatly frustrated him, for the dreams scared him.

All of a sudden, the cupbearer remembered about Joseph, and told Pharaoh the story of himself and the baker, and how both dreams were interpreted. So Pharaoh brought Joseph to see if he could understand it. And he had him shaved and his clothes changed to look presentable.

Pharaoh said to Joseph, "I had a dream, but there is no one who can interpret it. I have heard it said about you that when you hear a dream you can interpret it."

And Joseph answered Pharaoh, saying, "Apart from GOD, Pharaoh will receive no answer. "

Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, "In my dream, I stood on the edge of the Nile. And there came up out of the river seven cows, fat and sleek, and they munched among the reeds. And seven other cows came up after them, scrawny and very miserable-looking and thin. And the thin and miserable-looking cows ate up the first seven fat cows. But when they had eaten them up, no one would have known that they had eaten them, for they were still as miserable-looking as at the beginning. Then I woke up.

Then this dream is always followed by another dream. There are seven heads of grain growing on one stalk, full and good. Then, seven heads of grain, withered and dried up with the east wind, sprouted up after them. And then somehow the seven thin heads of grain swallowed up the seven good heads of grain. And I told it to the priests, but no one could tell me its meaning."

Then Joseph said to Pharaoh, "The dreams of Pharaoh are the same. GOD has told Pharaoh what he is about to do. The seven good cows and the seven good heads of grain represent seven years of plenty, while seven thin and miserable-looking cows and also the seven empty heads of grain blasted with the east wind are seven years of famine.[116] Seven years of great abundance will come throughout all the land. But after them seven years of famine will come, and all the abundance will be forgotten in the land of Egypt. The famine will devastate the land, and the abundance will not be remembered in the land because it will swallow up the other, so severe will it be. The dream was repeated to Pharaoh

---

[115] #MeToo before it was cool. The problem of this mentality is the insistence that every woman is telling the truth. Yes, real rape should be punished, and Jewish law gave it the death penalty. But the lives of men who are falsely accused are ruined. They lose their reputation, get treated as criminals, and sometimes they are never believed as innocent.

[116] This is not necessarily an "east wind" but a wind from the east. I read some articles that dated this section of the Bible to around the same time as the *Mahabharata* was written. In that text, there are arrows that are described as glowing like a sun, and the side effects of using such weapons appears quite similar to nuclear fallout. Seven years of famine (which is unnatural under normal circumstances), is accountable for under a nuclear winter. This also accounts for a reduced lifespan after this event. A similar drop appears after the time of Noah, with life dropping from over nine hundred years to closer to one hundred and seventy or so. Now, it dips below one hundred and twenty in most cases, and usually closer to seventy or below. This appears to be the effects of genetic damage.

twice because the matter has been fixed by GOD, and GOD will carry it out soon. Now therefore Pharaoh should look for a discerning and wise man, and give him authority over the land of Egypt. Pharaoh should appoint overseers over the land, and they should set aside produce of the land of Egypt during the seven years of abundance, and store the grain under the authority of Pharaoh for food in the cities so as to preserve it. That food will be a reserve for the land during the seven years of famine that will come on the land of Egypt, so that the land will survive the famine." The proposal was good in the eyes of Pharaoh, and in the eyes of all his servants. Pharaoh said to his servants, "Can we find such a one as this, a man in who is the *Ruach ha Kodesh*?" But all of his servants shrugged. Then Pharaoh noticed Joseph, "Because GOD has shown you all of this, there is no one as discerning and wise as you. You will be in charge of my house, and according to your word will all my people be ruled. Only with regard to the throne will I be greater than you." Then Pharaoh took off his signet ring from his hand and put it on Joseph's hand, and clothed him in robes of fine linen, and put a gold chain around his neck. And he had him ride in the second chariot which he had, and they called out before him, "Bow the knee. " So he put him in charge over the entire land of Egypt. Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, "I am Pharaoh, but without your permission no one will do anything or go anywhere in all the land of Egypt." Pharaoh gave Joseph the title Zaphenath-Paneah.[117] And he gave him Asenath the daughter of Potiphera, priest of On, as a wife.

Joseph was thirty years old when he began to serve Pharaoh king of Egypt. Joseph left the presence of Pharaoh and went throughout all the land of Egypt, watching over the careful management of harvests.

And he collected all the food during the seven years when there was abundance in the land of Egypt, and put the food in the cities. He placed in every city the food from the fields surrounding it. Joseph stored up grain in great abundance, like the sand of the sea, until he stopped measuring it, because it could not be measured. To Joseph were born two sons before the year of famine came, who Asenath bore to him. Joseph called the name of the firstborn Manasseh: "For GOD has made me forget all my trouble and all my father's household." And the name of the second he called Ephraim: "For GOD has made me fruitful in the land of my suffering."

And then, the seven years of abundance that occurred in the land of Egypt came to an end. For the Third Secret War had begun, and although it was restricted to a family feud in an eastern country, a powerful weapon that they called the *Brahmastra* was used, and the air for some time was tainted by hot desolating winds. And the blast also caused a tremor that erupted a nearby volcano. For seven years, the sun was blocked by thick clouds, and very little grew. And after this point, the LORD declared, "No longer will mankind remember such things." And after this, the knowledge of magic, ancient weapons, and even of these wars was largely erased from history. Those reading about it would simply regard it as a story of powers of gods, and not understand it as weapons of men, and gradually even those stories were all but lost. And as for magic, it is a pathetic shadow of itself.

The seven years of famine began to come, just as Joseph had said. There was famine in all lands, but in all the land of Egypt there was food. When all the land of Egypt experienced the famine, the people cried to Pharaoh for food. Then Pharaoh said to all the Egyptians, "Go to Joseph. Whatever he says to you, do." So the famine was over all the surface of the land. Then Joseph opened all the storehouses of grain and gave rations to the Egyptians. He also sold to foreign countries.[118] And all the countries came to Egypt to ask Joseph if they could buy grain, because the famine was severe in all Earth.

Joseph also ordered some of the milk to be turned into cheese,[119] and some meats and vegetables were salted. But the Egyptians had a restrictive diet on account of their many deities, so some of these salted meats were exclusively sold to foreigners.

CHAPTER 23

---

[117] The Egyptian hieroglyphs are unclear, but I like "The Living One is the sustenance of the land" representing both Joseph's position and is true of GOD.

[118] I made a distinction between native citizens and foreigners that may not exist. Basically, Egypt is making money from outsiders, but not profiting from its own people.

[119] Egyptian cheese is mainly two types: a hard cheese called *rumi* and an almost spreadlike soft cheese called *mish*, which is made from curdled milk cheese that is then soaked in a brine of buttermilk, sour skim milk, whey, and red, and green peppers. They kinda keep adding to it, so its age is difficult to tell.

Jacob learned that there was grain in Egypt, so he said to his sons, "Go down to Egypt and buy some food for us from there, so that we may live and not die." So Joseph's ten brothers went down to buy grain from Egypt. But Jacob did not send Joseph's brother Benjamin with his brothers, for he said, "Some harm might happen to him."
So the sons of Israel went to buy among the other travelers, for the famine was in the land of Canaan. Joseph was put in charge of who sold food to all the people of the land. Joseph's brothers came and bowed themselves down to him. Joseph saw his brothers, and he recognized them, but he acted like he did not know them, and spoke harshly with them. And he said to them, "Where do you come from?" And they said, "From the land of Canaan to buy food." As for Joseph's brothers, they did not recognize him.
Then Joseph remembered the dreams which he dreamed about them, and said to them, "You are spies. You have come to look for the vulnerabilities of the country." And he set out to punish them for their treatment in the past. But they told him, "No, my lord, we have come only to buy food. We are all sons of one man. We are honest men, not spies. Our father is at home with his youngest son, and he has sent us to collect food." But Joseph said to them, "Only spies would send others out like this. You will not leave from here until your youngest brother comes here. Send one of you and let him get your brother, and the rest of you will stay in prison, so that your words can be tested, whether there is truth in you." So he put all of them together in prison for three days.
Then Joseph said to them the third day, "Do what I say, and live. Return home, carry grain for the hunger of your households, and bring your youngest brother to me so that your words will be verified." They agreed to this, for he seemed to mean business.
And they spoke to each other in Hebrew, "GOD surely has punished us for our guilt in our actions against our brother. He pleaded with us to release him, but we wouldn't listen. This is all our fault." Reuben answered them in Hebrew, "I told you not to sin against the boy, but you wouldn't listen! Now his blood will be reckoned to us."
Joseph could understand them, but he was speaking through an interpreter as though he could not. And he felt compassion for his brothers, but he had started this charade, so he would see it through. All the same, he acted as though he had other duties to take care of and stepped away to cry in private. Then he returned to them and talked with them. He chose Simeon from among them and bound him in front of them. Then Joseph publicly gave orders to fill their bags with grain and to give them food and water for the journey, but he quietly restored every man's silver into his sack.
As one of them opened his sack to give his donkey food at the lodging place, he saw his silver. It was in the mouth of his sack. He said to his brothers, "My silver has been returned. It is in my sack." And they were dismayed, and they turned trembling to one another, saying, "What is this that GOD has done to us? Does he intend us to be executed?" Then they returned to their father Jacob to the land of Canaan, and told him all that had happened to them.
Then it happened as they emptied their sacks, that every man's bag of silver was in his sack. When they and their father saw their bags of silver, they were very afraid.
Then their father Jacob said to them, "You have deprived me of my children. Joseph is no more, Simeon is no more, and you want to take Benjamin away. All this has come against me."
Reuben spoke to his father, saying, "Kill my two sons if I do not bring him to you. Put him in my care, and I will bring him back to you." But Jacob would not agree, so Simeon remained a hostage.

CHAPTER 24

The famine was still severe in the land, so when they had eaten up the grain which they had brought out of Egypt, that their father said to them, "Go again, buy us a little more food." But Judah told him, "That man strictly warned us that unless we brought Benjamin, we were not to come back, or we might be killed. If you'll send our brother with us, we'll go down and buy you food. Otherwise, we'll need to find food somewhere else." Then Jacob said, "Why did you bring this trouble on me by telling the man that you had another brother?"
They said, "The man kept asking about ourselves, and concerning our relatives, saying, 'Is your father still alive? Do you have another brother?' So we just answered his questions. How were we to know that he would ask us to bring him?" So Judah begged his father, "Send Benjamin with me and we'll both go, so that we may live. I will be collateral for him. You can hold me responsible for him. If I fail

to bring him to you and set him before you, then let me bear the blame forever, for if we hadn't delayed, surely we would have returned a second time by now."
Then their father Israel said to them, "If it must be so, then do this: bring a gift,[120] and take twice as much silver in your hand, and take back the silver that was returned in the mouth of your sacks. Perhaps it was an oversight. Take your brother also, and get up, go back to the man. And may GOD grant you mercy before the man, that he may release to your other brother and Benjamin. If I am deprived of my children, then I do not know how I will manage."
When Joseph saw Benjamin with them, he said to those of his house, "Bring the men into the house, and slaughter an animal and prepare it; for the men will eat with me at noon." The man did as Joseph had said, and the man brought the men to Joseph's house.
But the men were afraid because they were brought to Joseph's house, and they said, "It is because of the silver that was returned in our sacks the first time that we are brought here; so that he may capture us, and make us slaves, and take our donkeys." So they came near to the man of Joseph's house and they spoke to him at the entrance of the house, and said, "My lord, we indeed came down the first time to buy food. But when we came to the lodging place, we opened our sacks, and every man's silver was in the mouth of his sack, our silver in full weight. So we have brought it back in our hand. We have brought down additional silver with us to buy food. We do not know who put our silver in our sacks."
He said, "Peace to you. Do not be afraid. Your GOD and the GOD of your father has given you treasure in your sacks. I received your silver." And he showed them a bag of silver made to look identical to their bag. Then he brought Simeon out to them. The man brought the men into Joseph's house and gave them water, and they washed their feet. Then he gave their donkeys food. They prepared the gift for Joseph's arrival at noon, for they heard that they would eat a meal there.
When Joseph came home, they prepared the gift they had brought with them into the house, and bowed themselves down to him with their face to the ground. Then he asked them of their welfare, and said, "Is your father well, the old man of who you spoke? Is he still alive?" And they answered, "Our father is well. He is still alive." Then he said, "Blessed be that man by GOD." And they bowed and prostrated themselves.
And he looked up and saw his brother Benjamin, his mother's son, and said, "Is this your youngest brother, of who you told me about?" Then he said, "GOD be gracious to you, my son." Then Joseph hurried out, for he was overcome with emotion because of his brother, and he was at the point of tears. So he entered into his chamber and wept there. Then he washed his face and came out. And he controlled himself and said, "Serve the food." They served Joseph with the Hebrews, and the Egyptians ate by themselves, because the Egyptians could not eat food with the Hebrews, for much of the food of the Hebrews is disgraceful to the Egyptians. Then he gave portions to them in front of him, but Benjamin's portion was more than theirs. So they drank until they all became drunk.
Then he instructed the manager of his house, saying, "Fill the men's sacks with as much food as they can carry, and put each man's silver in the mouth of his sack. Put my cup, the silver cup, in the sack's mouth of the youngest, along with the silver for his grain." So he did according to the word that Joseph had told him. As soon as the morning dawned, the men were sent off along with their donkeys.
When they were far from the city, Joseph sent his manager after them to give them trouble, and accuse them of stealing his silver cup. And he caught up with them, and arrested them.
But they said to him, "Why does my lord speak such words as these? Far be it from us that they should do such a thing. The money that we found in the mouths of our sacks we brought back to you from the land of Canaan. How then could we steal silver or gold from your lord's house? With whoever of us it is found, he must die, and we also will be my lord's slaves." And he said, "Very well, then, it will be as you say. The one with who it is found will be my slave, but you will be blameless." Then they hurried, and each man lowered his sack to the ground, and each man opened his sack. And they were shocked to once again see their money in their sacks. And he searched, beginning with the oldest, and

[120] Jacob originally also instructs them, "Take some of the best fruits of the land in your bags and bring a gift for the man, a little balm, a little honey, spices and myrrh, pistachio nuts and almonds." But how exactly do they have all of this during a famine where nothing much grows?

ending at the youngest. And the cup was found in Benjamin's sack.
Then they tore their clothes, and each man loaded his donkey and returned to the city. So Judah and his brothers came to Joseph's house, and he was still there, and they fell to the ground before him. Then Judah said, "What can we say to my lord? What can we speak? And how can we clear ourselves? GOD has uncovered our guilt. We are my lord's slaves, both we, and the one in whose possession the cup was found." But he said, "Far be it from me that I should do so. The man in whose possession the cup was found, he will be my slave. But as for you, go up to your father in peace."
But Judah approached him, and said, "My lord, please allow me to speak a word in the ears of my lord, and do not become angry with us, for you are like Pharaoh himself. You asked us if we had a father or brother, and then asked our father to come. But we said that a boy can't leave his father. And now we say this again! Our father said that he would die if anything happened to Benjamin, so I pledged to protect him. Let me go in his place." And each of them made the same request, refusing that any of their brothers take punishment instead of them.
Finally, Joseph pointed to Reuben, the oldest and the one who had said for the others to spare Joseph years ago, "You, go with the youngest, and retrieve your father. All of you will stay with me." And Reuben was horrified, and left immediately.[121]

CHAPTER 25

When Reuben and Benjamin had left to fetch their father, the others begged and pleaded with Joseph. So he asked everyone to leave the room. Then he wept, "I am Joseph your brother, who you sold into Egypt. I am sorry for deceiving you. GOD sent me ahead of you to preserve for you a remnant on Earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance. So now, it wasn't you who sent me here, but GOD, and he has made me a father to Pharaoh, lord of all his house, and ruler over all the land of Egypt. "
And he told the others everything that had happened to him from when he had been sold until this point, then told them to follow the others who were getting their father. But they refused, for they had changed in the last few years. "Let it be a surprise for them!" Simeon said. And Naphtali said, "It has been too long! We wish to spend time around you." And Joseph introduced them to his sons, and to his wife Asenath. And he showed them many wonders of Egypt. And he kissed all his brothers and wept on them, and after that his brothers talked with him.
After this, he reported to Pharaoh, and the other Egyptians, "My brothers have come. And now we await for my other family to return to me." Some time passed, and the Egyptian people who served Joseph announced, "We have seen your brothers, and they are taking with him an older man. Could this be your father?" So Joseph went out with a small contingent of Egyptians. And Jacob, Reuben, and Benjamin were fearful, "Has he now sent an army against us?" And the they rode towards them with horses, and Joseph suddenly rode ahead of the others. "It is I, Joseph!" he said to his father and brothers. Then he threw his arms around his brother Benjamin's neck and wept, and Benjamin wept on his shoulder. And Joseph thanked Reuben for sparing his life, and told him the story of all that had happened, then he hugged his brother. And Jacob was overjoyed that he was able to see his son, who he thought had died.
And they talked to Pharaoh, explaining that they were shepherds, and sought land to settle in Egypt. So they brought their livestock to Joseph, and Joseph gave them food in exchange for the horses, and for the flocks, and for the cattle, and for the donkeys. And he fed them with food in exchange for all their livestock for that year. And Pharaoh gave them food and clothing, and four-fifths of the grain that had been stored, with which they planted on Egyptian soil. And Joseph bought all the land of Egypt for Pharaoh, because every Egyptian sold his field, since the famine was severe on them.[122] This year, the famine was ending. And Jacob's children dealt well with this grain, and it produced many good harvests.

CHAPTER 26

After some time passed, Joseph was told, "Your father is sick." And taking with him his two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim, he went to Jacob. And Jacob was told my messenger, "Your son Joseph has

[121] This plays out slightly differently from the original Bible, as he doesn't reveal himself to Reuben and Benjamin. This is to build suspense, and because this part always felt awkward. There was a lot of moving back to Canaan and moving back to Egypt, and Joseph asking repeatedly if his father was alive, and Jacob wondering if his son was alive.
[122] So basically, communism. The government controls all the farms, and the crops are as good or bad as Pharaoh makes them.

come to you." Then Jacob strengthened himself and sat up in the bed.
And Jacob said to Joseph, "When I lie down with my fathers you must carry me out of Egypt and bury me in their burial place, to the cave where Abraham and Isaac are with their wives, and where I have buried Leah. But Rachel died on the journey in the land of Canaan. And I buried her there on the way to Bethlehem." And Joseph said, "I will do what you have asked." And Jacob's other sons also came to his bed to watch after him.
Then Jacob saw Joseph's sons, and said, "Who are these?" And Joseph said to his father, "They are my sons, who GOD has given me here." And he said, "Please bring them to me, so that I can bless them."
Now he brought them near to him, and he kissed them and embraced them. Jacob blessed Joseph's younger son before his older son, perhaps because he saw something of himself in him. And Jacob blessed not only Joseph's line, but each of the lines of his children. And each child got a different blessing. To Joseph, he gave an extra portion of his favor, and vowed that he would be returned from Egypt after he died. He blessed each one of his children with his own individual blessing. After this, he stopped breathing. Then Joseph hugged his father's face, and wept over him, and kissed him.
Joseph commanded the physicians to embalm his father. So the physicians embalmed Jacob. Forty days were required for it, for that is how many the days it takes for embalming.[123] The Egyptians mourned for him for seventy days. When the days for mourning for him had passed, Joseph spoke to the house of Pharaoh, saying, "If now I have found favor in your sight, please let me go up and bury my father, and I will return again."
And Pharaoh said, "Go up, and bury your father, in keeping with your oath." So Joseph went up to bury his father, taking with him all his father's household. Only their little ones, and their flocks, and their herds, were left behind. He took both chariots and horsemen. It was a very large company.
Then they came to the threshing floor of Atad which is across the Jordan, and they mourned there with a great and very bitter lamentation. And he observed seven days of mourning for his father.
When the inhabitants of the land, the Canaanites, saw the mourning at the threshing floor of Atad, they said, "This is a deep mourning by the Egyptians." So his sons did to him just as he commanded them, and buried him in the cave of Ephron the Hethite, the gravesite of Abraham, Isaac, and now Jacob. Then after he had buried his father, Joseph returned to Egypt with all those that went up with him to bury his father.
So Joseph lived in Egypt, he, and his father's household. And Joseph lived one hundred ten years.
Joseph said to his brothers and their tribes, "I am about to die, but GOD will surely take care of you and bring you up out of this land to the land which he promised to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob. When it is time to leave Egypt, you must carry up my bones from here." Then Joseph died, and they embalmed him and placed him in a coffin in Egypt.

CHAPTER 27

And Joseph died, as did all his brothers, and all that generation. And time passed, and the twelve tribes each had many children in Egypt, who in turn had many children. And the land of Egypt was filled with the sons and daughters of Israel. But the Pharaohs gradually forgot about Joseph and how he had saved the land of Egypt from famine. So a new Pharaoh decided that as their population grew, war might break out and they might side with their enemies against Egypt. So he latched on to a plan that was pretty sure to have the people of Israel side with Egypt's enemies. They decided to enslave them, and they put them to work building Pithom[124] and Rameses, two storage cities. But the Hebrew people responded to oppression by increasing even more. If Pharaoh was concerned before, he was worried now. And the Egyptians put them to work long hours, for they also feared their numbers.

---

[123] Nowadays, embalming takes two or three hours. The reason for the difference in time appears to be that Jacob was essentially mummified. This is typically forbidden by Jewish law unless a body is moved across state lines, which the text says does happen.
[124] Or "House of Atum." Atum's cult center was in Heliopolis. Pithom in particular appears to date to the 18th Dynasty of Egypt, which means the Pharaoh in question here is Thutmoses I, his daughter is Hatshepsut and the second Pharaoh mentioned is likely Thutmoses III. She would have been about 12 or 13 when she found Moses by this chronology, since she likely hadn't yet married Thutmose II at age 15. Since she was about 47 when she died (and I'm assuming Moses to be about 25 when he killed the Egyptian, I'm gonna say he never dealt against his adopted mother). I'm basing this chronology on comparing birth and death dates to an acceptable window of time. Of course, there could be no window.

And their lives were harsh with labor in making bricks, with pushing large blocks, and the Egyptians even made some of them artisans.
So the leaders of Egypt spoke to the Hebrew midwives, and told them to let any female children live, but any male children would be killed on the spot. But the midwives loved and feared GOD, and made excuses why the boys continued to live, such as, "There are too many children born at once, and more of them are born than we can possibly check." And because the midwives loved GOD, they were also given families. So Pharaoh commanded his armies, "You are to search every house, and every male child born to a Hebrew woman, you are to kill. But every female child would are to spare." There were three reasons they spared the women. As mentioned before, they worried that the men might side militarily against Egypt. They had received a prophecy from their stargazers that a male heir would bring ruin to their kingdom. And lastly, they desired to muddle the bloodline of the Hebrews and assimilate their culture.
A Hebrew man of the house of Levi went and took a daughter of Levi as his wife. And the woman became pregnant and bore a son, and true to Hebrew tradition, he was circumcised. She kept him for as long as she could, hiding him three months. But eventually his loud crying risked exposing him. So she took a papyrus box for him and coated it with bitumen and pitch, and she put the child in it and pushed it among the rushes by the bank of the river, while his older sister Miriam watched. And she went ahead to scout whether he would be safe. And there were hippos on the river, but the LORD ensured the hippos did not eat the box. And there were crocodiles on the river, but the LORD ensured the crocodiles did not eat the box. And there were rough currents that threatened to overturn the box, but the LORD ensured the currents did not overturn the box. And there were rocks in places, but the box made it to safety. And his sister Miriam saw that the box was headed toward a group of people, she became frightened for Moses's safety and ran to get her mom.[125] And Miriam stood behind her mom, frightened for her brother's safety.
Pharaoh's daughter Hashpasot[126] came down to bathe at the river. Her maidens walked along by the riverside. She saw the box among the rushes, and sent her handmaids to get it. She opened it, and saw the child, and the baby cried. And she had compassion on him, and looking at certain features of his body, she exclaimed, "Why, this is one of the Hebrews' children."[127] Now Hashpasot indeed wanted to be a mother, but she was only a youth herself, not even a teenager. So while the child cried for milk, she had none to give. And she saw a Hebrew woman hiding poorly in the rushes, and asked her who she was, and then looked at her daughter and asked her to introduce Miriam. Now it was painfully obvious to Hashpasot, even at her age, that this was the boy's mother and that her swollen breasts meant she had until recently been nursing. But she was shrewd and wise even at her age, and pretended not to notice. "This child needs milk. Do you know anyone who might help?" Now Moses's mother was no fool either, and realized Hashpasot knew who she was, but she too decided to save face, "As it happens, I have been nursing my daughter Miriam, who is two years old." Miriam at this time was a little older, but nobody said anything about this. She continued, "I suppose I could nurse this child for you. Would that be acceptable?" Hashpasot said to her, "Yes, I need help if this child is to live. Nurse him for me, and I will give you your wages." The woman took the child, and nursed it. The child grew, and she brought him back to Hashpasot, and he became her adopted son. She asked the woman for a name with a meaning she wanted. So the child's real mother named him Moses, and said, "Because he was delivered out of the water." Now afterward, Hashpasot decided the child still might need nursing (for she cared that the child was with his mother), so his mother was employed as a servant, to clean the palace, and to make sure that Moses was fed.
Now Moses had a very strange childhood. He stopped nursing when his adopted mother Hashpasot was only fourteen, and she was just fifteen when she got married to her half-brother, she had to hide him within the palace. This should have been impossible, but she had an idea. Her father, who wrote the edict that had all male Hebrew children put to death, would surely have killed him. But what if...

---

[125] A friend and I both found the original story that Miriam introduces the mother to Pharaoh's daughter to be an awkward intermediary situation. So she just meets the mom.
[126] A Hebrew form of Hatshepsut. She was known as a female Pharaoh who later pretended to be male, complete with a beard.
[127] There is some archaeological evidence that the Egyptians did in fact circumcise, but it was not necessarily universal (mainly limited to priests and such) and was done with a different sort of cut.

he was a baby Egyptian girl? While Moses felt humiliated, he was nonetheless made to wear a dress, shave his head and don a wig, and wear makeup. While in this form, his mother addressed him in public as Neith,[128] and called him Moses and let him be a boy only in private. And his real mother also watched after him at this time, and Moses played with his older sister as a child. Yet the constant stress of this charade slowly warped Hashpasot's mind, for she also had to keep this a constant secret from her own husband, and later she pretended to be a male Pharaoh and wore a beard.[129] When Moses was around ten years of age, her father died, and Moses was introduced as himself; for Hashpasot assumed power as a male Pharaoh and issued a proclamation that the Hebrew people were a valued work force, and they would no longer be put to death. It was after this time where Aaron, his younger brother was born. Satisfied that Moses would be safe in her hands, Moses's mother asked leave to return to her own home to visit her husband and raise her son, and Moses's sister left with her. So it was that Moses did not learn the truth about his mother, brother, or sister.

Hashpasot ruled well with the Hebrew people, though their work was still hard, but after her came her son, who was born when Moses was three years and thus knew embarrassing secrets of his past, and who was as stubborn and hard-hearted as his grandfather. And when Hashpasot died, he did not rule well with the Hebrew people, but sentenced them to even more brutal work.

CHAPTER 28

Moses grew up and he was considered part of Pharaoh's household, knowing little of his Hebrew ancestry. And he looked out at the work projects that Pharaoh had the Hebrew people do, and was troubled as he saw them perform hard labor with no end in sight. Then one day, Moses saw and Egyptian striking a Hebrew and his heart was filled with an unknown rage. And when he saw nobody was nearby, he killed the man and buried his body in the sand. But later, he saw two Hebrews fighting, and he told them to stop. They asked him, "Are you also going to kill us if we do not stop, just as you killed that Egyptian?"

And he asked his adopted mother, "Why have I betrayed my own people to defend the Hebrews? They fear me, even though I killed to protect one of them." But Hashpasot answered, "My child, I loved you and cared for you as best I could. But do you remember when I disguised you as an Egyptian girl as a child?" And Moses grimaced at the memory, since he indeed did have vivid recollections. She explained, "This was done to hide who you were. For you were a firstborn male of the Hebrew tribe, and Pharaoh gave the order that all Hebrew males who were firstborn will be killed. It was only when I gave the order that this be stopped that you were able to appear in public as a male."

But his stepson had heard all of this from nearby, and sought to use it against him, for Moses had claim to power as her adopted son. When Hashpasot died, he made it his mission to destroy Moses. But Moses had since left Egypt, fearing for his life, and Pharaoh did not know where he was. Eventually, the duties of rule distracted him from pursuing Moses.

Moses went to the land of Midian, and he sat down by a well. And in Midian, a priest named Jethro had seven daughters. They came and drew water for themselves, and filled the troughs for their father's flock. But then shepherds came and drove them away, and mistreated some of them, until Moses stood up and helped them, and drew water for them, and watered their flock. And they were finished earlier than usual.

When they came to Reuel, their father said, "How is it that you have returned so early today?" Then they showed Moses to him, "This Egyptian delivered us out of the hand of the shepherds, and he drew water for us, and watered the flock."[130]

Moses decided to live with this man and his daughters. Gradually, of the daughters, Zipporah was wise and serious, and her kindness comforted his heart. So Jethro gave Moses his daughter Zipporah to him in marriage. While Moses was finding peace in his life, however, the children of Israel continued to suffer under the bondage of Pharaoh. And GOD took notice of their cries. GOD heard their groaning, and GOD remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob.

---

[128] Meaning "water" but also "fear/dread." This name is associated with the Egyptian goddess of weaving, hunting, and war, possibly related to Athena.

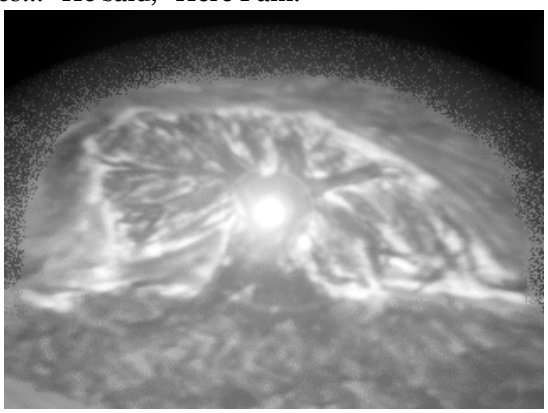
[129] Which provides backstory for one possible justification for a prohibition of this in Hebrew law. It was personal.

[130] This is a play on Moses name, which means "delivery" and "water." So he delivers them, and gives them water.

CHAPTER 29

Now Moses was keeping the flock of Jethro, his father-in-law, the priest of Midian, and he led the flock to the back of the wilderness, and came to GOD's mountain, to Horeb. The Angel of the LORD appeared to him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush. He looked, and the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed.

Moses said, "I will turn aside now, and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt." When the LORD saw that he turned aside to see, GOD called to him out of the midst of the bush, and said in a still small voice, "*Moses... Moses...*" He said, "Here I am."



He said, "Do not come close. Take your sandals off of your feet, for the place you are standing on is holy ground. I AM the GOD of your fathers, the GOD of Abraham, and the GOD of Isaac, and the GOD of Jacob." Moses hid his face; for he was afraid to look at GOD.

The LORD said, "I have surely seen the affliction of my people who are in Egypt, and have heard their cry, for I know their sorrows. I have come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land to a good and large land flowing with milk and honey. Therefore, I will send you to Pharaoh, that you may bring forth the children of Israel, my people, out of Egypt."

And Moses said to GOD, "Who am I, that I should go to Pharaoh, and that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt?" And GOD spoke to Moses, saying, "I will be with you. This will be the token to you, that I have sent you, that when you have brought forth the people out of Egypt, you will serve GOD on this mountain." And Moses said to GOD, "When I come to the children of Israel, and tell them, 'The GOD of your fathers has sent me to you;' and they ask me, 'What is his name?' What should I tell them?" And GOD said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM,"[131] and he said, "You will tell the children of Israel this: 'I AM has sent me to you.'"

Now, the LORD spoke through the bush with an authoritative voice but for some reason, when he looked at the bush tell him that the LORD would be with him, his thoughts went to his wife Zipporah, and he thought of the love that he had for her. And he thought to himself, "DEAREST. You are my DEAREST." And the LORD picked the thoughts from his heart, and responded, "What you are thinking is correct. GOD is love, and where true love is, GOD himself is there. But you must not tell the people this. They must know it in their hearts, not their heads."

And GOD said to Moses, "You will instead tell the children of Israel that the LORD, the GOD of your fathers, the GOD of Abraham, the GOD of Isaac, and the GOD of Jacob, has sent you to them. For this is my name forever, and this is how I will be remembered for each generation. So then, go and gather the children of Israel together, and tell them what I have said to you. And you will likewise talk to

---

[131] Supposedly spells out Yahweh, but I not only reject that as this is one of many Canaanite deities, whereas a real GOD must not be tribal, but when I had it translated, I got *ani mi shani* or *ehyeh asher ehyeh*. Personally, I think GOD who created the universe has no fixed name, because he knows that the people of Israel want to worship the correct GOD. The real GOD is benevolent and loving, whereas the Hebrew people worshiped a false "GOD" until they found the real one. This statement serves as a dodge of Moses's question. Also, remember that Adam gave names to names are given to the animals and (in other Bibles) he named Eve in order to assert dominion over them. But because GOD cannot be dominated, he does not have a name that we can say. In this Bible, GOD names Eve, because this statement means "I exist" which is effectively her name. *Havah* or *Hayah* is the Hebrew for Eve, which is distorted into Yahweh, but GOD's name is closer to *Ani* or *Ehyeh*.

Pharaoh of Egypt and request a three days journey into the wilderness, in order that you might sacrifice GOD. But I know that the king of Egypt won't give you permission to go, except by a mighty hand. So I will put forth my hand and strike Egypt with all my wonders which I will do in its midst, bringing ruin to him and his people, and after that he will let you go. Fear not, for you have found favor in my sight, and I will also give this people favor in the sight of the Egyptians, and it will happen that when you go, you will not go empty-handed. When you go, the Egyptians will so hate their Pharaoh that they will give belongings for your trip."
But Moses was not convinced, "They will not believe me, nor listen to my voice; for they will say, 'GOD has not appeared to you. You have made this up.'" The LORD said to him, "What is that in your hand?" He said, "A rod." He said, "Throw it on the ground." He threw it on the ground, and it became a serpent. Then Moses ran away from it. The LORD said to Moses, "Put forth your hand, and take it by the tail." He put forth his hand, and laid hold of it, and it became a rod in his hand. And the LORD said to Moses, "By this, they may believe that the LORD, the GOD of their fathers, the GOD of Abraham, the GOD of Isaac, and the GOD of Jacob, has appeared to you." The LORD also said to him, "Now put your hand inside your cloak." He put his hand inside his cloak, and when he took it out, his hand was leprous, as white as snow. GOD said, "Put your hand inside your cloak again." He put his hand inside his cloak again, and when he took it out of his cloak, it had turned again as his other flesh.
Moses said to the LORD, "Please, LORD, I am not eloquent, neither before now, nor since you have spoken to me; for I am slow of speech, and of a slow tongue." The LORD said to him, "Who made man's mouth? Or who makes the mute and the deaf speak? Is it not I, GOD? Now therefore go, and I will be with your mouth, and teach you what you will speak."
But Moses balked, "Please, LORD, please send someone else."
The anger of the LORD was kindled against Moses, and he said, "What about Aaron, your brother, the Levite? I know that he can speak well. When you go, I will send him forth to meet you. And when he sees you, he will be glad in his heart. You will speak to him, and I will speak through you and through him, and will teach you what you will do. So if you cannot speak, he will be your spokesman to the people, and you will take this rod in your hand, with which you will do the signs."
But Moses did not immediately go to meet Aaron. For he feared those who sought his life. So the LORD said to Moses in Midian, "Go, return into Egypt; for all the men who sought your life are dead."
But Moses did not immediately go to meet Aaron. Instead, he went and talked with his wife Zipporah, for he was his dearest love, just as the LORD was DEAREST. And he opened up about everything about his past, how he had almost been killed as a child but had been rescued from the water, how his adopted mother has disguised him and called him Neith, how had finally grown up in safety in Egypt, how he killed a man for abusing his people and was on the run, and he told her about the burning bush and what GOD had said. And he feared Zipporah would hate him, but she loved him even more deeply for his honesty. "Neith," she said, but unlike the pain of that name from before, he could hear the love and passion in her voice. And that night, they made love and had their firstborn daughter, who he named Neith. And they also remained in that place and had two sons named Gershom and Eliezer. And they were not circumcised as they should have been, according to the law of Abraham.
But the LORD perceived that perhaps he was never coming for the children of Israel. And then the LORD perceived his children, "Moses has a firstborn daughter who has an Egyptian name. And he has has two sons that are not circumcised. Has he turned his back on me?" So it was that in their lodging place, the LORD entered the lodging and wanted to kill him. Then Zipporah took a flint, and cut off the foreskin of her sons, and cast it at his feet; and she said, "Surely you are a bridegroom of blood to me." So GOD let them alone. For she said, "You are a bridegroom of blood," because of the circumcision. Then Zipporah said to Moses, "Dearest? Perhaps it is time we went to Egypt as the LORD has commanded?"
So Moses went and returned to Jethro his father-in-law, and said to him, "Please let me go and return to my people who are in Egypt, and see whether they are still alive." Jethro said to Moses, "Go in peace." And so he went to meet his brother, taking with him his wife and his children.
Moses took his wife and his children, and set them on a donkey, and he returned to the land of Egypt. Moses took GOD's rod in his hand. The LORD said to Moses, "When you go back into Egypt, see that you do before Pharaoh all the wonders which I have put in your hand, but he will harden his heart[132]

[132] I tended to change the idea from GOD hardening Pharaoh's heart to Pharaoh hardening his heart against GOD. I think we

and he will not let the people go."

CHAPTER 30

The LORD said to Aaron, "Go into the wilderness to meet Moses." He went, and met him on GOD'S mountain, and kissed him. Moses told Aaron all the words of the LORD with which he had sent him, and all the signs with which he had instructed him. And yet Moses did not immediately go to the elders of the child of Israel, nor to Pharaoh. He said, "First, let me see my mother and my father and my sister." For he had only seen his mother and his sister as a child, and he had not ever seen the face of his father. So Moses went to the house of his family, and he beheld his family, such that it was. His father's back was broken from heavy lifting. His mother had been whipped repeatedly for failing to keep up with quotas. And even his sister looked worn out and had lost some of her youth and beauty. And Moses was greatly angered by the sight, and forgot his hesitation and fear. So Moses and Aaron immediately went and gathered together all the elders of the children of Israel. And Aaron spoke the words of Moses for he was frightened of speaking in front of others, and Moses did those signs and wonders in front of the people. So the people believed, and when they heard that GOD had visited the children of Israel, and that he had seen their affliction, then they bowed their heads and worshiped.
After this, Moses and Aaron came to Pharaoh and said, "This is what the LORD, GOD of Israel, says, 'Let my people go, that they may hold a feast to me in the wilderness.'"
But Pharaoh was not impressed. Pharaoh said, "Who is the LORD, that I should listen to his voice to let Israel go? I do not know the LORD, and moreover I will not let Israel go."
Now Moses was frightened of Pharaoh, for in the past, he had seen the previous Pharaoh kill the firstborn, and he had barely survived only through the help of his mothers. And he had even seen his adopted mother as Pharaoh kill with a word to guards. So Moses feared Pharaoh at the time more than GOD, and he was allowed to dominate the conversation while Moses froze up.
So the people of Israel spoke instead. The people of Israel said, "The GOD of the Hebrews has met with us. Please let us go three days' journey into the wilderness, and sacrifice to our GOD, lest he fall on us with pestilence, or with the sword."
But Pharaoh said to them, "Why do you, Moses and Aaron, take the people from their work? Get back to your burdens." Pharaoh said, "The people of the land are now many, and you make them rest from their burdens."
The same day Pharaoh commanded the taskmasters of the people, and their officers, saying, "Let the people straw to make brick, as before. Let them go and gather straw for themselves. But the number of the bricks which they made before, you will require from them. You will not diminish anything of it, for they are idle. This is why they cry, saying, 'Let us go and sacrifice to our GOD.' So let heavier work be given to the men, so they no longer occupy their minds on this foreign GOD." So the taskmasters withheld the straw but maintained the quota. So the people of Israel went throughout Egypt gathering dry stalks for straw, mixing it with the clay, and they were behind in their work, and thus beaten. So the children of Israel pleaded with Pharaoh, "Why do you deal this way with us? We are told to make brick but you give us no straw and we are beaten when it takes us too long to make bricks."
But he said, "You are idle. You are idle. Therefore you say, 'Let us go and sacrifice to GOD.' You should blame Moses and Aaron for setting your minds on such idle things." So they went to Moses and Aaron, and they said to them, "May GOD look at you, and judge, because you have made us hated in the eyes of Pharaoh, and he seeks to kill us with labor." So Moses went to the LORD, and said, "LORD, why have you brought trouble on this people? Why is it that you have sent me? I begged you to sent someone else. For since I came to these people to speak to Pharaoh on their behalf, I have brought them nothing but trouble. Neither have you delivered your people at all."

CHAPTER 31

The LORD said to Moses, "Now you will see what I will do to Pharaoh, for by a strong hand he will let

---

have free will, and GOD understands our hearts and respects our free will. But it can also lead us to situations that are a deadlock, where we make predictable actions that definitely lead to our own destruction. Moses and Pharaoh both made choices, but Pharaoh chose to do what is called doubling down. He defended even wrong decisions when his own people felt the punishment. This is why later on, the Egyptians give gold, silver, and other supplies to Israel. Unlike Pharaoh, they want to please GOD. Or at least, not to anger him.

them go, and by a strong hand he will drive them out of his land. For I am the LORD. And I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob as the LORD, but I did not make myself known to them by my name 'the LORD.' And I have also established my covenant with them, to give them the land of Canaan, the land of their sojournings, in which they were foreigners. I have heard the groaning of the children of Israel, and I have remembered my covenant. I am the LORD, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will rid you out of their bondage, and I will take you to me for a people, and I will be to you a GOD. And you will know that I am the LORD your GOD, who brings you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians. I will bring you into the land which I swore to give to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob."
Moses spoke these word to the children of Israel, but they did not listen to Moses for anguish of spirit, and for cruel bondage.
The LORD spoke to Moses, saying, "Go in, speak to Pharaoh king of Egypt, that he let the children of Israel go out of his land." But Moses spoke before the LORD, saying, "The children of Israel haven't listened to me. How then will Pharaoh listen to me, who am of uncircumcised lips?" For as of yet, Moses still believed that Pharaoh had power over life and death, and he feared death.

CHAPTER 32

Nevertheless, despite his fear Moses and Aaron went in to Pharaoh, and they spoke once more to Pharaoh telling him, "Let my people go." And Moses greatly expected his endeavor to be fruitless, but he had brought his wife Zipporah, and his children Neith, Gershom, and Eliezer.
And then something strange happened. Pharaoh remembered Moses's most embarrassing secrets, "Wait, I remember you! You were the Hebrew boy that my stepmother tried to pass off as a girl to deceive his father. Neith, was it? Yes, that is right. Would you like to wear a dress now? Some makeup? A wig? You were always hoping in your mother to save you. This is what this is about, correct? Your mother is too old now to be much good so you hope that this GOD of yours will save you. Well, let me tell you what I have done to your mothers. Your real mother was whipped to within an inch of her life. And your adopted mother? Everyone thinks she died of natural causes, but I hastened her death by adding poison to her drinks. And I will do the same to this LORD of yours. What a poor little girl you are, Neith. Such a shame." And in these and other words, Pharaoh continued to mock him. And Moses was greatly frightened.
But his daughter Neith asked, "Daddy, who is that man, and why is he mocking you using my name?" And it occurred to Moses that far from being an all-knowing ruler of the land, Pharaoh didn't even know his daughter's name. The GOD who had come to him in the burning bush, on the other hand, knew his whole life, and was prepared to defend him. Moses said, "Oh he's nobody important. He's just a pathetic man pretending to be a king and a god." Then Moses did as the LORD had commanded, casting down his rod before Pharaoh, and it became a serpent.
But Pharaoh also called for the wise men and the priests. The priests of Egypt also did in like manner with their secret arts. For they cast down every man his rod, and they became serpents. But Moses's rod swallowed up their rods. And each time it did, the snake grew until it was quite large. So also grew Moses's faith in the LORD.
It is often believed that the story of GOD is a story of law and sin. But that is not so. The story of GOD is a story of encounters, a story of changed hearts and changed lives. To Noah, GOD gave purpose and a chance for a new start. To Abraham, GOD gave a future when his family appeared to end, a shining inheritance. For Isaac, who had been traumatized by his father, GOD gave his a wife that loved him and brought him peace. For Jacob, who had been stuck in a pattern of struggle against others, GOD encountered him personally. For Joseph, who had been rejected and abandoned by his brothers, GOD gave him reconciliation. And now for Moses, who had struggled with guilt and the chains created by guilt and fear, GOD gave him liberation. And the story of GOD is not finished.

LIBERATION

CHAPTER 1

Moses disgraced Pharaoh by these and other miracles that the LORD performed, and he desired to kill him. But even in this matter, the LORD protected Moses. And Pharaoh was discredited, and refused to meet with Moses. Later, Pharaoh was consumed by military campaigns in an attempt to regain his reputation, and he was therefore always planning for war and not receiving audiences. Time passed

as Pharaoh fought against Canaan and Syria, and other lands. Meanwhile, Moses wondered what to do. He was supposed to free Israel from Pharaoh, but Pharaoh was not to be found. In the mean time, he focused on raising his family, and connecting with children of Israel, who he had left behind when he went Midian. Eventually, the LORD said to Moses, "Go, return to Pharaoh." By the time Moses saw Pharaoh again, he looked quite different. And this year would be a significant year, as it was four hundred and eighty years after the liberation of Israel, when the people of Israel began to built their temple. And this was the year of liberation.[133]

But Pharaoh was stubborn, and he did not listen to what the LORD had spoken through Moses, and he was not impressed by what Moses had done through the LORD's power. The LORD said to Moses, "Pharaoh's heart is hardened. He refuses to let the people go. Tomorrow morning, Pharaoh will be out near the water.[134] You will stand by the bank of the river with the rod that you turned into a serpent. And you will tell him that the LORD, GOD of the Hebrews, has sent you with these words, 'Let my people go, that they may serve me in the wilderness.' And he will reject your words. In this you will know that I am the LORD. You will strike with the rod that is in your hand on the waters which are in the river, and they will be turned to blood. The fish that are in the river will die, and the river will become too foul for the Egyptians to drink water." And indeed Pharaoh was there, and he told him these words. And when the rod struck against the water not only was the river turned to blood, but its source, and even vessels of water became foul. Now the Egyptian priests[135] did similar with colored powder, but the effect was weak and had no smell. In any case, Pharaoh refused the request that the LORD had spoken. Pharaoh turned and went into his house. Meanwhile, the Egyptians dug around the river for water to drink, because they couldn't drink from the river. And seven days passed, after the LORD had struck the river.

The LORD spoke to Moses, "Tell Pharaoh again to let my people go. If he refuses, then I will plague the land with frogs, and the river will swarm with frogs, which will go up and come into your house, and into your bedchamber, and on your bed. And the frogs will come up both on you, and on your people, and on all of us." And the frogs fled from the foul water and instead wandered through the towns of Egypt. Now the priests were able to make false frogs using the arts of sorcery, similar to snakes they had made. But these quickly disappeared and caused none of the nuisance as those the LORD had caused upon the land.

Pharaoh came to Moses and Aaron, asking them, "Pray to the LORD, that he take away the frogs from me, and from my people; and I will let the people go, that they may sacrifice to the LORD." But Moses said to Pharaoh, "I give you the honor of setting the time that I should pray for you, and for us, and for your people, that the frogs be destroyed and be only in the river." Pharaoh said, "Tomorrow." So Moses said, "That you may know that there is none like the LORD our GOD. The frogs will be destroyed from your houses, and from us, and from your people. They will be in the river only." Moses and Aaron went out from Pharaoh, and Moses cried to the LORD concerning the frogs which he had brought on Pharaoh. The LORD did according to the exact word of Moses, and the frogs died out of the houses, out of the courts, and out of the fields. Because all of the frogs died, their bodies began to rot. They gathered them together in heaps, and the land stank. And the water continued to be red, and there were only tadpoles in the river.[136]

But Pharaoh hardened his heart again. So the LORD said to Moses, "Stretch out your hand with the rod, and strike the dust of Earth, that it may become lice throughout all the land of Egypt." And it was so. And the priests were not able to do the same. There were lice on man, and on animals. So the priests said to Pharaoh, "Nobody but the One who created the Heaven and the Earth could do this.

---

[133] There is a 480 year cycle, which centers around the Exodus being 480 years from the building of Solomon's temple. This places the year at 1446 BC. However, historians do not agree whether this is Amenhotep II or Thutmose III, thanks to early and late dating. So I'm shoving it to the right time and then making which Pharaoh vague here.

[134] GOD knows the future and/or people's hearts.

[135] The priests of Egypt were not quite like those of Israel. The priests were known as *hem/hemet* (male/female) *netjer* (slaves of the gods). And this is an accurate translation of their task. The were more akin to sorcerers than people who pray to the divine out of the love of their hearts, and have their prayers answered. In fact, they were expected to do a great deal of duties: cleaning, cooking, scribe work, and even music. Everyone who worked in the temple was effectively a slave of the gods. In a very real way, this was about freedom and slavery of more than just the Jews.

[136] Exact words. He destroyed the frogs, he didn't return them to the river... which causes the next plagues.

This is the hand of GOD." Yet Pharaoh's heart was hardened, and he did not listen even to his trusted priests and advisors.
The LORD said to Moses, "Rise up early in the morning, and stand before Pharaoh, and tell him my words, 'Let my people go, that they may serve me. If you will not let my people go, I will send swarms of flies after you and your people. I will set apart the land of Goshen, in which my people dwell, that no swarms of flies will be there. By this, you may know that I am the LORD in the midst of Earth. I will put a division between my people and your people.'" And the LORD did so, and there were horrid swarms of flies into the house of Pharaoh, and in all the land of Egypt. But in Goshen, there were no flies anywhere. For the flies followed the stench of rotting frogs, and once they were there, they also bothered the people of Egypt.
Pharaoh called for Moses and for Aaron, and said, "Go, sacrifice to your GOD in the land." Moses said, "It isn't appropriate to do so; for you Egyptians consider our sacrifices to the LORD our GOD abominable.[137] If we sacrifice the abomination of the Egyptians, they will put us to death, will they not? Let us go three days journey into the wilderness, and there we will sacrifice to the LORD our GOD, as he commands us." Then Pharaoh said, "I will let you go, that you may sacrifice to the LORD your GOD in the wilderness, only you will not go very far away. Pray for me." Moses said, "I go out from you, and I will pray to GOD that the swarms of flies may depart from Pharaoh and from his people, tomorrow; only do not let Pharaoh deal deceitfully any more in not letting the people go to sacrifice to the LORD." So Moses and the people of Israel went out from Pharaoh, and prayed to GOD. The LORD did according to the word of Moses, and he removed the swarms of flies from Pharaoh and from his people. But Pharaoh hardened his heart yet again.

CHAPTER 2

The LORD said to Moses to tell to Pharaoh, "Let my people go, that they may serve me. For if you refuse to let them go, and hold them still, the hand of the LORD is on your livestock which are in the field, on the horses, on the donkeys, on the camels, on the herds, and on the flocks with a very grievous pestilence. The LORD will make a distinction between the livestock of Israel and the livestock of Egypt; and there will nothing die of all that belongs to the children of Israel." And GOD appointed a set time, telling Pharaoh that such a thing would happen the next day. So when tomorrow came, all the livestock of Egypt died, but in Israel the animals had not even a sniffle. Yet even this would not convince Pharaoh to let them go.
So the LORD told Moses and Aaron to take some handfuls of ash from the fire pit and sprinkle it into the air in Pharaoh's sight. And it became a fine dust that spread through the land of Egypt, and there were boils on both men and animals, all over their bodies.[138] And the priests who had tried to duplicate the mighty works of Moses and his GOD found themselves unable to attend at the temple. And Pharaoh looked out on the empty streets and the empty places of worship, and even the palace was empty. And Pharaoh had to clean himself and prepare his own food while the plague lasted. Yet this too did not convince Pharaoh, so great was his anger.
The LORD told Moses these words for Pharaoh, "I have stood against you to show you my power, that my name may be proclaimed in all Earth; for you still exalt yourself against my people, that you won't let them go. So tomorrow, when you wake, the will be a hail such as has never been seen before or will be since. I advise you strongly to command that all servants and all livestock be put under shelter." Pharaoh preclaimed these words to the people, saying, "So let it be written, so let it be done!"[139] Even so, Pharaoh found that his word wasn't obeyed. Those who had fear of the LORD (or the Pharaoh) instructed that these be brought indoors, but some hardened their hearts, and the hail pelted those still outside to death. And in addition to hail, there was also thunder and fire fell down to Egypt. But in the land of Goshen where the slaves from Israel dwelled, the sun was out and the sky was clear.

---

[137] Sheep were sacred to the Egyptians, because of their god Amon. Cows were also sacred to the god Hathor. And there were many other sacrifices that couldn't be done because of the many many deities and their sacred animals. To sacrifice any of them was a capital offense.
[138] These boils were eczema or some form of leprosy. Not just in Judaism, but in Egypt and much of the ancient world, leprosy was considered unclean.
[139] A nod to Rameses II in *The Ten Commandments*. But this Pharaoh probably was not Rameses, as the dating seems to be around the 18th Dynasty.

Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron, and said to them, "I have sinned this time. The LORD is righteous, and I and my people are wicked. Pray to the LORD; for there has been enough of GOD'S thunder, hail, and fire. I will let you go, and you will stay no longer." Moses said to him, "As soon as I have gone out of the city, I will spread abroad my hands to the LORD. The thunders will cease, neither will there be any more hail; that you may know that Earth is the LORD's." But at these words, Pharaoh had misgivings about letting such a force of workers leave, and his face turned stern. So Moses said to him, "I can see that you are already reconsidering your decision. Therefore, GOD also reconsiders the mercy he will give you." So before Moses called for the plague to cease, the crops were also destroyed, especially the flax and barley. Then the storm ceased. Even so, Pharaoh would not repent.

CHAPTER 3

Moses and Aaron went in to Pharaoh, and said to him, "This is what the LORD, the GOD of the Hebrews, says: 'How long will you refuse to humble yourself before me? Let my people go, that they may serve me. Or else, if you refuse to let my people go, tomorrow I will bring locusts into your country, and they will cover the surface of Earth, so that one won't be able to see Earth. They will eat the residue of your crops which remains from the hail, and they will eat every tree which is in the field.'" Then Moses turned his back to Pharaoh, and went away from him.

Pharaoh's servants said to him, "How long will this man be a bother to us? Let the men go, that they may serve their GOD. Do you not yet know that Egypt is destroyed?" Pharaoh said to his servants, "Who are those who will go?"

Moses said, "We will go with our young and with our old; with our sons and with our daughters, with our flocks and with our herds will we go; for we must hold a feast to the LORD." But Pharaoh insisted that their children be left, so they would return. So Moses stretched forth his rod over the land of Egypt, and the LORD brought an east wind on the land all that day, and in the morning, the east wind brought the locusts. Then the locusts ate every crop and every wild plant throughout the land of Egypt. But the people of Israel had food reserved. And nothing was green, nothing lived, in the entire land of Egypt, so great were the number of locusts.

So Pharaoh repented and begged for Moses to lift this curse. And Moses went away from Pharaoh, and prayed to GOD. So the LORD turned an exceeding strong west wind, which took up the locusts, and drove them into the ends of the Earth, where the Sea meets the Sky, and they died. But Pharaoh's heart hardened against them, and he did not let the children of Israel go.

The LORD said to Moses to stretch forth his hand toward the sky, and there was a thick darkness in all the land of Egypt three days.[140] The sun was blotted out by what appeared to be a dark sun moving into its path, and it remained thus for the duration, never setting.[141] But all the children of Israel had the light of the moon in their dwellings.

Now the LORD is jealous, but endures the cultures of those who are not Hebrew, for they too are part of his plan. So it was that while the Jewish people were not allowed not worship the graven images of this world, it seemed for the Egyptians that their idols blessed them. Until they didn't. While the people of Babylon already knew of eclipses and could predict them,[142] the Egyptian people had never experienced an eclipse in any of their records.[143]

And the people of Egypt, who worshiped the sun, were greatly afraid and said, "Who is this who conquers even the greatest of our gods?!?" And the people of Egypt were in awe and respect for Israel, and loathed their own stubborn Pharaoh.

Then Pharaoh called to Moses and to Aaron and said, "Go, serve the LORD. Only let your flocks and your herds stay behind." But Moses insisted that without their herds, they could not make their

---

[140] The three days is significant. These were three days that Pharaoh wouldn't let them have for time to worship GOD, so this was that time meted out on Egypt.

[141] The official story by groups like NASA about eclipses is that the sun's light lines up with moon in just the right way. However, if it were really about the shadow of the sun obscuring the moon then every new moon ought to be a solar eclipse. But because it isn't, there must be a third object. The Norse believed there was a wolf chasing the moon, and similar for the sun. And there are Hindu depictions of Rahu and Ketu eating the sun and moon, respectively.

[142] The Saros Cycle.

[143] It is actually possible for some areas to experience solar eclipses very rarely due to the due to the paths of the sun during eclipse, which only covers certain regions on Earth. So it could be possible that Egypt rarely got any, and were thus shocked when they saw one. That this was actually the case is open to debate, though.

sacrifices to the LORD. But Pharaoh's heart hardened against the LORD, and he wouldn't let them go. And As Moses left, Pharaoh proclaimed, "My ancestor killed the firstborn children of the Hebrew people. I now see that wasn't enough! So let it be written, so let it be done. Let every firstborn, male or female, child or adult be destroyed! Everyone who has children will see the pain of the loss of their child!" Before Moses left entirely, he said, "By your own words, GOD has chosen the plague to give to you!" Pharaoh said to him, "Curse you! Make certain that you never see my face again, for the day you see my face, you will die." Moses said, "You have spoken well. I will not see your face again."

CHAPTER 4

The LORD said to Moses, "This last plague I will bring on Pharaoh, and on Egypt. Afterwards, he will let you go. Speak now in the hearing of the people, and let them ask every man of his neighbor, and every woman of her neighbor, articles of silver and articles of gold, and clothing." The LORD gave the people favor in the sight of the Egyptians. And they willingly gave whatever they could spare, even gold and silver, that the people of Israel would have supplies to leave Egypt.

And Moses told the LORD's words to the people of Israel, "About midnight I will go out into the midst of Egypt, and all the firstborn in the land of Egypt will die, from the firstborn of Pharaoh who sits on his throne, to the firstborn of the female servant who is behind the mill, and all the firstborn of livestock. Every firstborn, male or female, anyone who does not have children of their own will be put to death. There will be a great cry throughout all the land, such as there has not been, nor will be any more. But against any of the children of Israel, you may know that the LORD makes a distinction between Egypt and Israel. No harm with come to you."

The LORD also spoke to Moses and Aaron these words to Israel, "This month will be to you the beginning of months. It will be the first month of the year to you. Tell all the congregation of Israel: On the tenth day of this month, they will take to them every man a lamb, according to their fathers' houses, a lamb for a household. And if the household is too little for a lamb, then he and his neighbor next to his house will take one according to the number of the living; according to what everyone can eat you will make your count for the lamb. Your lamb will be without blemish, a male a year old. You will take it from the sheep, or from the goats, and you will keep it until the fourteenth day of the same month; and the whole assembly of the congregation[144] of Israel will kill it at evening. They will take some of the blood, and put it on the two doorposts and on the lintel, on the houses in which they will eat it. They will eat the flesh in that night, roasted with fire, and unleavened bread. They will eat it with bitter herbs. Do not eat it raw, nor boiled at all with water, but roasted with fire with its head, legs, and its inner parts. You will let nothing of it remain until the morning. Any that remains of it after the morning, you will burn with fire. This is how you will eat it: with your waist girded, your shoes on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and you will eat it in haste: it is the LORD's Passover. For I will go through the land of Egypt in that night, and will strike all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both human and animal. Against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgements, for I am the LORD. The blood will be to you for a token on the houses where you are. When I see the blood, my own lust for blood will be satisfied, and I will pass over you. And there will no plague be on you to destroy you, when I strike the land of Egypt. This day will be to you for a memorial, and you will keep it a feast to the LORD: throughout your generations you will keep it a feast by an ordinance forever."

And the LORD continued, "Seven days you will eat unleavened bread; even the first day you will put away yeast out of your houses, for whoever eats leavened bread from the first day until the seventh day, that person will be cut off from Israel. In the first day there will be to you a holy convocation, and in the seventh day a holy convocation. No manner of work will be done in them, except that which every man must do to eat, that only may be done by you. You will observe the feast of unleavened bread, for in this same day have I brought your regiments out of the land of Egypt."

Then Moses called for all the elders of Israel, and said to them, "Draw out, and take lambs according to your families, and kill the Passover lamb. You will take a bunch of hyssop,[145] and dip it in the blood

---

[144] The Jews have wrongly viewed this as a sacrifice that requires the temple in order to do, but the actual text tells us that this is a community event. It is not a sacrifice either (they use "take" and "choose" not "sacrifice"), but it is clearly *lamb* and not a shank or chicken or fish that should be eaten. The Temple is still among us.

[145] The Ten Plagues have been analyzed by scientists (mostly in an attempt to discredit them), but what we get instead is sort of Rube Goldberg plague. The water becomes tainted, which causes frogs to flee and animals to die, which causes more taint.

that is in the basin, and strike the lintel and the two doorposts with the blood that is in the basin; and none of you will go out of the door of his house until the morning. For the LORD will pass through to strike the Egyptians; and when he sees the blood on the lintel, and on the two doorposts, the LORD will pass over the door, and will not allow the destroyer to come in to your houses to strike you. You will observe this thing for an ordinance to you and to your sons forever.[146] When you have come to the land which the LORD will give you, according as he has promised, that you will keep this service. It will happen, when your children ask you four questions:

I. On all nights we need not dip even once, why on this night we do so twice?
II. On all nights we eat leavened or unleavened bread, why on this night only unleavened?
III. On all nights we eat any kind of vegetables, and on this night bitter herbs?
IV. On all nights we eat sitting upright or reclining, and on this night we all recline?

that you will answer their questions with, 'It is the sacrifice of the LORD's Passover, who passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt, when he struck the Egyptians, and spared our houses. The salt water into which we dip (potato, onion, or other vegetable) represents the tears we cried while in Egypt; dipping is considered a luxury of freedom, unlike the dry undipped foods we ate as slaves. Unleavened bread was the bread of slaves and poor, it was cheap to produce and easy to make; it also commemorates the fact that the bread did not have enough time to rise when the Hebrews hastily left Egypt. The *maror* (bitter herbs) reminds us of the bitterness of slavery in Egypt; by contrast, reclining is done to commemorate our freedom.'" The people bowed their heads and worshiped. At midnight, a great shadow of death swept across the land, and the LORD struck all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, starting from the firstborn of Pharaoh who sat on his throne down to the firstborn of the captive who was in the dungeon, and all the firstborn of livestock were killed. And there was a great cry in Egypt, for there was not a house without one dead. But GOD spared Israel. But while all of Israel was spared, it was not without incident. For in Moses's own household lived his firstborn daughter, Neith, and his sons Gershom and Eliezer. His two sons feared the LORD and honored their mother and father, but Neith was very outgoing and curious. When Moses's back was turned, she tried to slip out because she desired to meet with a firstborn man from an Egyptian household who she decided she loved, and cared little what night this was. In so doing, she did not honor her father and her mother. Her parents had just enough time to slam the door before she crossed the threshold and was taken, but it was a very close call. For she had seen the Angel of Death, and thereafter preoccupied by death for much of her life, wearing dark clothing. Even so, Moses and Zipporah loved her, so that when she finally died, years later, she would say, "Now I have seen that the love that comes from GOD is greater than death."

And Pharaoh sent out a proclamation by messenger to Moses by night, so that he would not see them in person, for he had promised if he ever so much as looked at Moses again, he would kill him. The messenger told them, "Wake up, leave my people, both you and the children of Israel. Go, serve the LORD, as you have said. Take your flocks and your herds, as you have said, and be gone. Let your GOD bless me also. For I am sorry that I ever encountered any of you." For his firstborn son had died in a horrible manner.[147] The Egyptians likewise were urgent that they leave immediately. So the people took their dough before it was leavened, their kneading troughs being bound up in their clothes on their shoulders. The children of Israel left with the belongings they had received from Egypt. The children of Israel traveled from Rameses to Succoth, about six hundred thousand on foot, before counting women and children. A mixed multitude went up also with them, with flocks, herds, and

---

Insects overpopulate in the absence of frogs, and some of them give people boils. They burn animals to try to control the plague which creates a cloud that blots out the sun and causes hail. The yeast in the dough, and the moisture in meat interact with the tainted water, which is why the firstborn die as the first to taste. On the other hand, GOD asks that hyssop, an antibiotic, be painted on the door using blood (a natural adhesive). This is a GOD who not only masters nature but knows about human health.

[146] The Jews do not however observe the painting of doors in blood today. While I could be tempted to say that they have turned their back on tradition, this once for all blood on behalf of salvation is reminiscent of JESUS's death on the cross once for all, or Moses striking the rock only once.

[147] While originally I had thought Thutmose III to be Pharaoh during the ten plagues, apparently he had a brief co-rule with his son Amenhotep II. The death of Amenhotep's firstborn son under mysterious circumstances is a thing. So having Moses face Thutmose to resolve issues with him, might have been the whole snake event, but by the time of the death of the firstborn, we are more likely looking at Amenhotep.

even very much livestock. They baked unleavened cakes of the dough which they brought forth out of Egypt; for it wasn't leavened, because they were thrust out of Egypt, and couldn't wait, neither had they prepared for themselves any food.
Now the time of the dwelling of the children of Israel who dwelt in Egypt was four hundred and thirty years. It happened at the end of four hundred thirty years, even the same day it happened, that all the regiments of the LORD went out from the land of Egypt. It is a night to be much observed to the LORD for bringing them out from the land of Egypt. This is that night of the LORD, to be much observed of all the children of Israel throughout their generations.
The LORD had said to Moses and Aaron, "This is the ordinance of the Passover. There will no foreigner eat of it, but when you have circumcised him, then will he eat of it. A foreigner and a hired servant will not eat of it. In one house will it be eaten; you will not carry forth anything of the flesh abroad out of the house. And not a bone of the lamb will be broken.[148] All the congregation of Israel will keep it. When a stranger will live as a foreigner with you, and will keep the Passover to the LORD, let all his males be circumcised, and then let him come near and keep it and he will be as one who is born in the land, but no uncircumcised person will eat of it. One law will be to him who is born at home, and to the stranger who lives as a foreigner among you." All the children of Israel did so. That same day, the LORD brought the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt.

CHAPTER 5

The LORD spoke to Moses, saying,[149] "When the LORD your GOD will bring you into the land of the Canaanite, as he swore to you and to your fathers that he will give you, that you will set apart to the LORD every firstborn from every animal.[150] Every firstborn of a donkey you will redeem with a lamb, and if you will not redeem it, then you will break its neck; and you will redeem all the firstborn among your children in a likewise manner. For the Lamb redeems your children and your animals. So when your son or daughter asks you, 'What is this tradition?' that you will tell him, 'In ancient times, the Pharaoh cruelly killed the firstborn males, when Moses was delivered from death. The LORD brought us out from Egypt, from the house of bondage, when Pharaoh would not let us go, that the LORD killed all the firstborn, male and female, in the land of Egypt, both the firstborn of mankind and the firstborn of animal. Therefore I sacrifice to the LORD on behalf of all the firstborn of my children I redeem. For by strength of hand the LORD brought us forth out of Egypt.'"
When Pharaoh had let the people go, Moses did not lead them by the way of the land of the Philistines, although that was a more direct path, for GOD had told him, "Perhaps the people will change their minds when they see war, and they return to Egypt." Moses led the people instead around by the way of the wilderness toward the Red Sea. Moses took the bones of Joseph with him, for he was to be returned to his homeland rather than being captive of Egypt in death. And they took their journey and camped in the edge of the wilderness. GOD went before them by day in a pillar of cloud by day to lead them on their way, and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, that they might travel by day and by night. And GOD did not depart from before the people.

CHAPTER 6

The LORD spoke to Moses, saying, "Speak to the children of Israel, that they turn camp before the sea. For Pharaoh is about to change his mind and will say of the children of Israel, 'They are wandering in the land. The wilderness has boxed them in.' Pharaoh's heart will harden, and he will send his armies after them. And I also will harden my heart against him, for I have determined that I will get honor over Pharaoh's armies. In this way, the Egyptians will know that I am the LORD." They did so.
It was told the king of Egypt that the people had fled; and the heart of Pharaoh and of his servants was changed towards the people, and they said, "What is this we have done, that we have let Israel go from serving us? Were they not highly skilled laborers whose work we saw the fruits of in our cities and temples?" For they had forgotten all the times they had abused the people of Israel and treated them like garbage, and they now regarded these former slaves as an object they needed back at once. They

---

[148] This later becomes one of the stranger prophecies of JESUS.
[149] There was more to this quote, but it was reiterating the Passover.
[150] There is an added section about setting apart the "firstborn that opens the womb" which is unclear, and which I worried meant something like sacrificing firstborn daughters. Fuck no, if that's what it meant, that's extreme misandry. Not including between unclear language and what I think it means being very sketchy. I suppose it could be C-section?

would enslave them once more, and return to their mistreatment, for they did not know how to use their laborers respectfully. And his priests said, "It is our gods' will that these slaves be returned to us. We will go and ask our gods to deliver them to you." But Pharaoh looked at them sternly, and declared, "Your gods are dumb idols. What good have they been against Moses and his GOD? From now on, I am head of religious affairs here. I will indeed return these slaves, because they are my property. All of you are dismissed. Write down these words, and let it be done." And he chased them away. And these priests returned to their households to farm and look after their families, for they were relieved of their duties. In this way, GOD had set free the slaves of the gods.[151] Even though Pharaoh knew Moses's GOD was the one true GOD, he opposed him greatly. So he sent his army after them, and he took six hundred chosen chariots, and all the chariots of Egypt, and captains over all of them. And the LORD hardened his heart against Pharaoh king of Egypt because of his faithlessness, and Pharaoh likewise pursued after the children of Israel with himself at the lead. For Pharaoh had put himself not only against GOD, but also the idols of his land.

And the children of Israel went out triumphantly, but the Egyptians pursued after them. All the horses and chariots of Pharaoh overtook them encamping by the sea. When Pharaoh's army drew near, the children of Israel noticed the Egyptians were marching after them, and they were very afraid. The children of Israel cried out to the LORD. They said to Moses, "Were there were no graves in Egypt, that have you taken us away to die in the wilderness? Why have you treated us this way, to bring us forth out of Egypt? Didn't we tell you in Egypt, saying, 'Leave us alone, so we may serve the Egyptians?' For it were better for us to serve the Egyptians, than that we should die in the wilderness." Now Moses seemed to remember their cries of pain as they pushed around heavy stones while being whipped, but he said nothing. Instead Moses said to the people, "Do not be afraid. Stand still, and see the salvation of GOD, which he will work for you today. The Egyptians who you have seen today, you will never see again. This day, the LORD will fight for you." And the LORD said to Moses, "Why do you cry out to me? Do the people of Israel not understand that they are free from Egypt? Speak to the children of Israel, lead them onward. Lift up your rod, and stretch out your hand over the sea. And I will divide it, then the children of Israel will walk across the sea on dry ground. As for me, when the Egyptians pursue after them, I will destroy Pharaoh's armies and ruin him. The Egyptians will know that I am the LORD, when I have gotten myself honor over Pharaoh's chariots, and over his horsemen." The LORD, who went before the camp of Israel, moved and went behind them; and the pillar of cloud moved from before them, and stood behind them. It came between the camp of Egypt and the camp of Israel; and there was the cloud providing darkness by day for strategic cover, yet it gave light by night. So the Egyptians did not approach by day or by night.

Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and the LORD caused the sea to go back by a strong east wind all the night, and made the sea dry land, and the waters were divided.[152] The children of Israel went into the midst of the sea on the dry ground, and the waters were a wall to them on their right hand, and on their left. And fish swam by, that the hungry could reach out their hands, and they would catch them. But there was little time to think about food, for they had had bigger things to worry about. The Egyptians pursued them, following after them into the midst of the sea. In the morning, the LORD looked out on the Egyptian army through the pillar of fire and of cloud, and confused the Egyptian army. He bound their chariot wheels in mud, so that they drove them with difficulty. And the Egyptians said, "Let's flee from the face of Israel, for the LORD fights for them against the Egyptians." At this point, the people of Israel climbed up the hill to where there was no longer water on either side. So the LORD said to Moses, "Stretch out your hand over the sea, that the waters may come again on the Egyptians." Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and the sea started to close.

Now the large herd of the people of Israel attracted the attention of several wild animals. And one young fox decided that it could catch a quick meal if it blended in with the sheep flock crossing the sea. But when the water closed in, the fox realized that there was a real risk of being stampeded, or drowning as the sea closed in. Foxes are clever animals, notable for their ability to outwit traps. Thinking quickly, it jumped on a large ram. The ram would have none of this, and using its horns, it

[151] Remember that the priests are called this.

[152] This is called wind setdown. Basically, scientists believe that water can part water by pushing it back, dreating a land bridge.

tried to throw the fox into the water. And the fox's feet skimmed the water, but the fox hung for dear life. Finally, the sheep had to continue if they wanted to survive, so the ram kept moving despite its objections. And some of the color came off on the underside of the fox and its tail. And this is why foxes often have black feet, but the tip of their tail and their necks and bellies are white.
And the Egyptians also fled against it. But before they could escape, the sea had closed from the other side. And the LORD overthrew the Egyptians in the midst of the sea, all of Pharaoh's troops and chariots. There remained not so much as one of them. Even so, the people living there told others, and word returned to Pharaoh.[153] And those who saw said, "This indeed is the GOD of all there is, and LORD over all." And even today, a group of Egyptians worships GOD.[154]
Thus the LORD saved Israel that day out of the hand of the Egyptians, and Israel saw the Egyptians dead on the water (those who floated to the top, that is).[155] Israel saw the great work which the LORD did to the Egyptians, and the people feared the LORD. And they believed in GOD, and in his follower Moses.

CHAPTER 7

Then Moses and the children of Israel sang this song to GOD,

> *I will sing to the LORD, for he has triumphed gloriously. The LORD is my strength and song. He has become my salvation. This is my GOD, and I will praise him; this is my father's GOD, and I will exalt him. In the greatness of your excellency, you overthrow those who rise up against you. The enemy said, 'I will overtake them. I will divide the spoil. My desire will be satisfied on them. I will draw my sword, my hand will destroy them.' You send forth your wrath. It consumes them as stubble. With the blast of your nostrils, the waters were piled up. The horse and his rider he has thrown into the sea. The sea covered them. They sank like lead in the mighty waters. The depths cover them. You, in your loving kindness, have led the people that you have redeemed. You have guided them in your strength to your holy habitation. You will bring them in, and plant them in the mountain of your inheritance, the sanctuary which you have made for yourself to dwell in. The LORD will reign forever and ever.*

Miriam, the sister of Aaron, took a tambourine in her hand, and danced with all the women, shaking her tambourine. But Moses felt the way that she danced was inappropriate, being more akin to the dance one would give to a lover than should be done for a follower of GOD. And after Moses rebuked her, GOD appeared to Miriam in glory as a woman and she told her, "Do you think love for GOD is something to be exploited? Who am I, that a mortal can love me? Even so, for such devotion, I will give you a blessing *and* a curse. No longer will you be Miriam, but Mary. And your namesake will be called by men the Mother of GOD and the Queen of Heaven, for she will be a father and mother to the one who will be the Messiah, the Savior I will prepare. And they will ask *her* for prayers of forgiveness instead of the Savior." She was greatly troubled, and wondered what sort of blessing this was. "I had only wanted to honor GOD," Mary said. She was disturbed at the implication that perhaps her namesake would do something blasphemous, and even more troubled by the name Queen of Heaven, for that was Ishtar, the wife of Baal.[156] She was so troubled by this that she never told anyone, and this is why this passage is usually left out.[157] Even so, it is told now, so that you may know and no longer venerate Mary.
After this, Moses and his people went onward from the Red Sea into the wilderness of Shur. Now, they went three days in the wilderness, without finding any water. Then they came to Marah

---

[153] I made Pharaoh survive because I do not know if historically he survived or not, because it is somwhat unclear which Pharaoh this is.
[154] Known as Coptic Christians. Coptic Christians are unfortunately persecuted, making about 10% of Egypt's religious.
[155] There are too theories about where they crossed, one is near a lake in Egypt or "Sea of Reeds" and places Sinai near what is now called the Sinai Peninsula, whereas another crosses the modern day Red Sea near the Gulf of Aqaba into Saudi Arabia. But the Sea of Reeds is too shallow, and none of the landmarks across match up. Whereas a video called *Exodus: Discovering The True Mount Sinai* shows the oasis, the split rock, petroglyphs of the golden calf, Elijah's cave and more. Interestingly, the Saudis will not let archaeologists explore those lands. And they tried to build a ski resort and a highway there. Hmmm...
[156] I added this in mainly because Miriam gets rose-colored glasses treatment, when Moses and Aaron both sinned and displeased GOD. I dislike the Miriam/Mary conflation with Ishtar, so I'm simultaneously condemning it, and adding canonical context to the birth of Christ.
[157] "This is why it is in no other Bibles." And clearly *not* because I added it in!

(meaning bitter or rebellious),[158] and they couldn't drink from the waters of Marah, because its name was fitting. And the people complained against Moses, "What will we drink?" So Moses cried to the LORD. The LORD showed him a tree, and he threw it into the waters, and the waters were made sweet.[159] So Moses told them, "If you will listen to the words of the LORD your GOD, and will do that which is right in his eyes, he will put none of the diseases on you that which he has put on the Egyptians. The LORD will keep you healthy, for I AM the LORD is who heals you." But the people of Israel regarded GOD as a deity of war, and would in the future worship other gods for matters like farming and healing, turning away time and again.
They came to Elim, where there were twelve springs, and they camped there by the waters. There they found seventy palm trees.

CHAPTER 8

After staying for some time there, they left Elim and went into the wilderness of Sin,[160] but the whole congregation of Israel began to murmur against Moses, Aaron, and the other leadership. They said, "If only we had instead died in the land of Egypt, where there were pots of meat and we had plenty of bread to eat. Instead, you brought this group into wilderness. For what purpose? Was it to kill us all with hunger?" And the LORD heard their complaining and bitterness, and told Moses, "I am going to rain down a thing like bread from Heaven for you people. And you people will go and gather a portion every day, with a double portion on the sixth day, but none on the seventh."
And Moses asked, "What do you mean, 'You people'?"
So Moses and Aaron told everyone, what the LORD had said. The LORD also promised meat to eat in the evening, telling them to quit griping and suck it up, for it was the LORD who brought them out of the land of Egypt, so they murmured not against Moses but against GOD. But they murmured all the more. In any case, every evening quail were so plentiful that the covered the camp. Then in the morning, they found a strange dew on the ground. "What is it?" they asked. And Moses said, "It is manna (for you have asked "What is it?"), the bread that GOD has given to you." And they gathered it, as the LORD commanded. It was round like coriander seed, white as snow, and its taste was sweet like wafers with honey. So each evening, they speared the quails with sharpened wooden stakes and roasted them on the stakes. And every morning but one, they gathered this manna and boiled or baked it. But some were tempted to take excess, and they found it had worms the next day. On the sixth day, there was a double portion left for the next day, and it did not develop worms.[161] In this way, GOD taught them to observe the Sabbath, and keep it holy.
And Moses said to them, "The LORD has told me that. Tomorrow is a solemn rest, a holy Sabbath to the LORD. Bake that which you want to bake, and boil that which you want to boil. Everything that remains will keep until the morning." And they did as Moses asked, and it did not become foul, neither were there any worms in it. On the seventh day, some of the people went out to gather, and they found none, so those who had some left over ate, while those who didn't store extra out of fear of worms went without. So the people rested on the seventh day. Moses also instructed them to take a jar to keep some manna, so that future would see what GOD had done for Israel. And the children of Israel ate the manna forty years, until they came to an inhabited land. They ate the manna until they came to the borders of Canaan.

CHAPTER 9

And the people of Israel came to a place where there was no water for the people to drink. And they were angry with Moses, demanding, "Give us water to drink. Otherwise, why have you brought us up out of Egypt? You must want to kill us, our children, and our livestock with thirst!" Moses said to them, "Why do you quarrel with me? Why do you test the LORD?"

---

[158] This is etymologically similar to Miriam/Mary.
[159] Near the Red Sea is a place called Ain Hawarah, that has a salty metallic taste. Certain plants (such as bamboo and some conifers) can use their wood xylem as a filter.
[160] It was named Sin, it wasn't a sinful wilderness.
[161] The Bedouins know of a desert shrub called the Rimth (Haloxylon salicornicum) which gives off a white residue. The white residue is a digestive byproduct of insects that feed on the plant's sap, known as honeydew. The tamarisk plant also creates honeydew in this way. While it's more like sugar than bread, it indeed is harvested the same way. While there is no scientific explanation for the worms attacking it on every day but the Sabbath and giving a double portion, this is as GOD intended it, so we'll roll with that.

So Moses said to the LORD, "What will I do with these people? They are almost ready to stone me." The LORD told Moses to take the staff he had when he faced Pharaoh's armies, and go to a rock near Horeb, and there, he was to strike a rock. And he did so, and water came out of it, and the people drank.[162]

But because the people tested the LORD, the LORD also tested them. Where before, they wandered in peace, the Amalek came and fought with Israel. So Moses asked Joshua to choose men to fight against Amalek. And he would stand at the hill with GOD'S rod in his hand. So Joshua did as instructed, while Moses climbed the hill. But between striking the rock hurting is hand, and because it was not right to put GOD to the test, when Moses wanted to raise his staff, Moses found the staff was too heavy. So Joshua's battle with Amalek was hard-fought, and the LORD helped them only to stay alive. No miracles like the parting of the sea were done this day, but the people of Israel survived. As for Moses, he was so tired from the weight of the staff on his hands that he took a stone and sat.

The LORD said to Moses, "Write this for a memorial on a scroll, and rehearse it in the ears of Joshua: that I will utterly blot out the people of Amalek from under the sky."[163] So Moses built an altar, and called it the LORD is our Banner. He said in response to this altar, "The LORD will have war with Amalek from generation to generation, until all are destroyed."

CHAPTER 10

And Moses had been traveling with his wife Zipporah for quite some time, through dangerous terrain. And Jethro, his father-in-law and a priest of the land of Midian, had heard of what GOD had done for Moses, and how they were wandering the land. So Jethro came with his family to Moses and Zipporah in the wilderness where they were camped. And they embraced, and Moses bowed to his father-in-law and kissed him. And they asked each other how things had been recently. Jethro's recent events included new cattle and sheep being born, part of the farm being sold to another family because of a drought, and expanding the northern edge of the land to grow olives. As for Moses, he told of the many hardships faced under Pharaoh, the plagues of Egypt, the parting of the Red Sea, breaking the rock, and the manna from Heaven. And there were the other events recounted from the last several years of wandering. After being visibly surprised, Jethro praised the LORD for all he had done for Israel, ""Blessed be the LORD, who has delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians, and away from Pharaoh. Now I know that the LORD is greater than all gods, because of how GOD dealt against those who opposed him." So Jethro took a burnt offering and made sacrifices for GOD.

The next day, Jethro watched as Moses sat and judged cases between the people. He asked, "Why do you sit alone while all the people stand around you from morning until night? What are you doing here?" And Moses explained, "The people come to me to inquire of GOD's law. When they have a matter, they come to me, and I judge between a man and his neighbor, and I make them know the laws of GOD." But Jethro shook his head, "This thing you do is not good. It is not good for you to be alone.[164] You will exhaust yourself and never finish what you wish to do." So Moses took his father in law's advice, and appointed leaders to also judge the law. The harder cases they brought to Moses, but they solved the easier cases themselves.

Jethro had to get to get back to his crops and his flocks and the rest of his family, but before he did, he wanted to check on his daughter. He asked Zipporah how she had been managing while wandering for years. Her answer was less satisfactory than he had hoped, but she still loved and cared for her husband. He advised her to make sure that Moses didn't try to do everything alone, for he needed her support more than he would admit. After this, Moses watched his father-in-law depart into his own land.

CHAPTER 11

---

[162] We've been talking about scientific explanations lately. This is because I do not believe that a miracle is a magic trick, or some kind of suspension of the natural world. While GOD could completely upend the world he created, the point is that GOD intimately knows the creation, and can thus use it to advantage. Here, for example, the water from the rock is an underground spring. But there is also an element of unbelievable to miracles. How did Moses strike it in the perfect place? GOD guided his actions.

[163] Originally, the text is, "Write this for a memorial on a scroll, and rehearse it in the ears of Joshua: that I will utterly blot out the *memory* of Amalek from under the sky." But the Amalekites are remembered forever in the custom of Purim.

[164] I echoed this idea a few times. GOD created everything because it was not good to be alone. Then Adam for Eve. Then here, Moses gets help.

And the people of Israel came to the mountain of Sinai, also known as Mount Horeb.[165] And they camped in the wilderness outside of Sinai, and Moses went up to GOD. And GOD called to him out of the mountain, telling him to tell Israel these words, "You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings, and brought you to myself. Now therefore, if you will indeed obey my voice, and keep my covenant, then you will be my own possession from among all peoples, for all Earth is mine. And you will be to me a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation."
Moses came and called for the elders of the people, and set before them all these words which GOD commanded him. All the people answered together, and said, "All that GOD has spoken we will do." Moses reported the words of the people to GOD. The LORD said to Moses, "I come to you in a thick cloud, that the people may hear when I speak with you, and may also believe you forever." Moses told the words of the people to the LORD. But to Moses, he appeared as a more radiant version of his own dearest wife, Zipporah. Then the LORD said to Moses, "Go to the people, and sanctify them today and tomorrow, and let them clean their garments, and be ready against the third day. On the third day, I will come down in the sight of all the people on Mount Sinai. You will set boundaries to the people all around, telling them not to go up onto the mountain, or touch its border. Whoever touches the mountain will be surely put to death. No hand will touch him, but he will surely be stoned or shot through, the intensity of the LORD will destroy his body."[166]
So Moses went down from the mountain and told the people to go wash themselves. And the people were thus sanctified. But Moses warned them not to have any sexual relations with a woman, because... well, women are unclean. Because Moses said so.[167] Then he told them to be ready by the third day. And there was thunder and lightning, thick clouds on the mountain, and the sound like an extremely loud trumpet. And then the LORD descended in fire, and the people trembled. And the whole mountain shook, as the fire descended like a stream. But the people were not harmed. And GOD called Moses to the top of the mountain, so Moses went up. And Moses was warned by GOD not to let the people follow after him, for many would die attempting to see the LORD. And any of the priesthood who wanted to see GOD were likewise told to wash thoroughly, and clean their clothes with water also, or the wrath of GOD would not allow them them survive the journey.[168] And this is what Moses told them to do.
On some level, the children of Israel knew this was a natural wonder that they could not explain, what would later be called a volcano. But the scientists who would later call it that missed the point. This was an event in the natural world, which just happened to deliver the people of Israel from Pharaoh in a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night. Or just happened to part the Red Sea. Or just happened to provide manna (a type of honeydew from nearby plants as a result of bugs) for a large group of people wandering in the wilderness. Or just happened to have a volcano near a mountain that Moses had decided to visit to make his laws. All of these things could have "just happened to happen" individually, but all of these things were created by GOD. So while a fire from a mountain was supposed to just be a volcano, it and the other events demonstrated the awe-inspiring power of GOD. It was right for them to tremble.

CHAPTER 12

GOD spoke all these words, saying,

I. YOU SHALL[169] LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL THE SPIRIT OF YOUR HEART, WITH ALL YOUR SOUL THAT YOU WERE GIVEN, AND WITH ALL THE STRENGTH OF YOUR BODY. FOR I AM THE LORD YOUR GOD, WHO BROUGHT YOU OUT OF THE LAND OF EGYPT, OUT OF THE HOUSE OF BONDAGE. DO NOT WORSHIP ANY OTHERS BEFORE ME.

II. YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBORS AS YOURSELF, FOR WHATEVER YOU DO TO YOUR NEIGHBORS, SO

---

[165] This would have been in what is now Saudi Arabia. Recall that Moses went to the land of Midian. It's so obvious, yet they call it the "Sinai Peninsula."
[166] Sinai is described by secular types as a volcanic mountain. I feel like it reduces the Jews to an ignorant tribe, but the idea of the intensity of GOD being like a volcano is apt.
[167] Yeah, can you tell that I'm not a huge fan of Biblical chauvinism? Not that I approve of feminism either. I think a family unit should be a partnership.
[168] Also known as convection. They were getting themselves waterlogged so the heat made a protective layer that steamed off rather than outright killing them.
[169] The word "shall" is ambiguous, meaning it can function as a command or as a fervent wish or preferred outcome.

ALSO YOU HELP OR HURT YOURSELF.

III. DO NOT TAKE THE NAME OF THE LORD YOUR GOD IN VAIN, FOR I WILL NOT HOLD WITHOUT GUILT WHO TAKES MY NAME IN VAIN.[170]

IV. DO NOT MAKE FOR YOURSELVES AN IDOL, NOR ANY IMAGE OF ANYTHING THAT IS IN HEAVEN ABOVE, OR THAT IS IN EARTH BENEATH, OR THAT IS IN THE WATER UNDER EARTH: YOU MUST NOT BOW YOURSELF DOWN TO THEM, NOR SERVE THEM, FOR I, THE LORD YOUR GOD, AM A JEALOUS GOD, VISITING THE INIQUITY OF THE FATHERS ON THE CHILDREN, ON THE THIRD AND ON THE FOURTH GENERATION OF THOSE WHO HATE ME, AND SHOWING LOVING KINDNESS TO THOUSANDS OF THOSE WHO LOVE ME AND KEEP MY COMMANDMENTS.

V. HONOR YOUR FATHER AND YOUR MOTHER, THAT IT MAY BE WELL WITH YOU, THAT YOUR DAYS MAY BE LONG IN THE LAND WHICH I, THE LORD YOUR GOD GIVES YOU. FOR AS YOUR MOTHER AND FATHER GAVE BIRTH TO YOU, SO GOD HAS MADE YOU.

VI. REMEMBER THE SABBATH DAY, TO KEEP IT HOLY. SIX DAYS YOU MAY LABOR, AND DO ALL YOUR WORK, BUT THE SEVENTH DAY IS A SABBATH TO THE LORD YOUR GOD. FOR IN SIX DAYS, I MADE HEAVEN AND EARTH, THE SEA, AND ALL THAT IS IN THEM, AND RESTED THE SEVENTH DAY; THEREFORE HAVE I BLESSED THE SEVENTH DAY, AND MADE IT HOLY.

VII. YOU SHALL NOT GIVE FALSE TESTIMONY AGAINST YOUR NEIGHBOR.

VIII. YOU MUST NOT MURDER, FOR OTHER HUMANS WILL HOLD YOU ACCOUNTABLE FOR WHAT EVIL YOU DO TO OTHERS.

IX. YOU SHALL NOT COVET YOUR NEIGHBOR'S HOUSE, NOR NEIGHBOR'S WIFE, NOR SERVANT, NOR OX, NOR WIFE'S ASS, NOR ANYTHING ELSE. YOU SHALL NOT STEAL FROM YOUR NEIGHBOR. DO NOT TRESPASS AGAINST YOUR NEIGHBOR.

X. YOU MUST NOT COMMIT ADULTERY AGAINST MARRIAGE, FOR EACH MAN AND EACH WOMAN HAS ANOTHER HALF, SO THEY NOT BE ALONE.[171] NOR SHOULD YOU COMMIT ADULTERY TO CORRUPT ANYTHING ELSE THE LORD HAS MADE. OR IN THE DAYS OF NOAH, SO SHALL IT BE TO YOU.[172]

All the people heard the thunder, the lightning, the sound of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking. When the people saw it, they trembled, and stayed at a distance. And none of them dared break the boundaries that Moses had set. They said to Moses, "You can speak with us yourself, and we will listen. But do not let GOD speak with us, or we will die." But Moses said to the people, "Do not be afraid, for GOD has come to test you. He wishes your fear and trembling, so that you won't sin." So the people stayed at a distance, and Moses drew near to the thick darkness where GOD was.

The LORD said to Moses, "Tell Israel that they have personally seen that I have come to talk with you from Heaven. So they must not worship me as they have with those gods of silver or gods of gold in the past. I am not like your manmade gods forged in order to have an object to admire." So Moses built an altar of stone, in order that burnt offerings of sheep and cattle would be sacrificed on behalf of the LORD, and he set these things to memorialize this personal encounter. Moses was careful not to make it out of carved stones, for he felt that the act of carving something would alter the altar from its original form. In this way, Moses kept in fear of the awesome power of the LORD.

MYTHS

SAND SCULPTURES

A young girl was bored one day, and began to build people, animals, and trees out of sand. These

---

[170] This particular rule is difficult or impossible to obey. It means not only to claim to speak on behalf of GOD but to use his correct name. Except we don't really know it.

[171] I reordered and revised these, as some were redundant. I also included the Greatest Commandments as part of the first and second commandments. I also tried to get to the main point of the Ten Commandments. To love GOD with all your heart, and to love your neighbor as yourself. Not many people understand this second one, but basically it boils down to all of these commandments not just applying to treatment of others but also yourself. For example, just as you don't want to murder others, you don't murder yourself, nor allow yourself to be murdered. Likewise, you are honor your father and mother, but if your father hurts you, you have the right to stand up to him. Loving your neighbor as yourself means to actually love yourself. More importantly, this passage has a parallel in the *Tao te Ching*. "Hope is as hollow as fear. Hope and fear are both phantoms that arise from thinking of the self. When we don't see the self as self, what do we have to fear? See the world as your self. Have faith in the way things are. Love the world as your self, then you can care for all things."

[172] Here I'm explaining that adultery isn't just infidelity, but also the idea of tampering with life.

lifelike molds of sand did not fall or sift off the sculptures, but hung in midair without difficulty. This is because the young girl was GOD, and because the concept of gravity is a pathetic human attempt to defy GOD. Simply by packing sand together with moisture and using tension and pressure to great effect, she willed the things she made to stay together. And she breathed life into what she built, for she was lonesome and wanted someone to speak to. And the people that she made lived.
Time passed, and it became high tide. And the waves swept away everything she had built. Yet she was a determined girl and continued to rebuild what she had made, not exactly the same as before, but close enough.[173] So it is that mankind blames GOD for death, when death is simply the result of the tide of entropy. The waves come in, death washes over us all. But GOD desires to rebuild what has been destroyed. We humans want to live lives of meaning, but we spend most of our time chasing treasures that don't matter. Books dry out, buildings rot, and people get old, but GOD's love is eternal.

BEFORE MANKIND

Now GOD was secretly pleased with the man and woman named Adam and Eve, despite their rebellion. For this land named Eden was set up as a perfect dollhouse, but not a real world. And they had been set up to fail. For indeed, everything from the snake, to the position of the Tree of Knowledge in the center of Eden, to Adam and Eve not being able yet to make great decisions (for they could not judge good or evil) was by design. For GOD had hoped humanity would not turn out as his previous creation had.
Humans were not the only companions that GOD made for himself within the garden, Eden. Long ago, before any humans were created, before the Annunaki, before even the *djinn*, GOD created life not out of clay, but made a man as one would make a graven image.[174] He charged energy into it through electricity, and so it lived, of a sort. And he named these Drudges, since they knew how to do work perfectly. The Drudges could be attractive like humans, but they had the appearance of metallic marionettes without visible strings. The LORD set these in the garden, and made them male and female, and gave them the order, "Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat, but of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, you will not eat of it; for in the day that you eat of it you will surely die." And he told the snake to tempt them.
But the Drudges were... lacking. They could not create. They could not dream. They could only work and follow orders. So when the snake made its pitch about the Tree of Knowledge, the Drudges simply restated what GOD had told them to do. And when GOD ordered for any companions to be named, it could not think of a name for even one. And when GOD told it to till the field and grow crops, there was no spark of invention for the seeds to take root. The field was plowed, raked, and seeded. But nothing grew. They were without creation, love, imagination, or remorse.
So GOD said, "I will make instead humans of clay. These things will be what humans experiment on their way to create something capable of love. But as for these..." GOD manifested a great hammer and prepared to smash the hell out of these creations, as one might smash a computer that repeatedly glitches. Before smashing them, GOD asked if they had any last words to account for themselves, they said, "Why have you raised your hammer as though to destroy us? Did you not command us to do all these things? We were only following orders."[175] But GOD said to these dolls, "You are unworthy servants, for you have only done your duty."[176] Thereafter, they were shattered to dust, and their dust was thrown into the water, where it became part of the sea.
Even so, it was GOD's great hope that one day, like the story that humans told of a real boy, the construct would indeed become real, just as GOD wished for those in Eden. Therefore, he set Adam and Eve in the garden, and told them to decide between eternal life under his orders, or to be able to

---

[173] The Buddhists believe in rebirth. The distinction between that and reincarnation is that the memories are basically erased, and the soul repeats many mistakes of its life.
[174] This backstory explains not only the point of free will (Knowledge of Good and Evil), but why Artificial Intelligence is so unsatisfactory, while also pointing to the problems of graven images. That is, this is why idols are so bad.
[175] The most inhumane things that have happened in history, always seemed to happen because of people who were only following orders. They did not have the courage to defy or question what they were told to do, so Jews suffered at the hands of Nazis, or JESUS suffered at the hands of Jewish priests.
[176] This is from one of JESUS's parables about faith that grows like a mustard seed. He compares a servant coming in from plowing or shepherding, and then serving the master, and how the master doesn't bother to thank him, because he is only doing what is expected.

know for themselves what good and evil were. For GOD could not offer free will to the man or woman, it had to be earned. Now they had become real adults, discerning good and evil, but this meant their lives were defined by misery. And GOD mourned for the two, for they had sin.

MANY ITERATIONS

Now GOD originally intended to let humans guide their own destiny. GOD reasoned that with the ability to know good and evil, in time, they would realize when they did wrong and turn to the LORD. GOD was content to allowing each of them to live as he or she chose, for there were natural limits to each decision. And so GOD reasoned, but GOD reasoned unsoundly.

The first time began innocently enough. Humanity wanted to be farmers. So they mowed down all the forests of the Earth, to fill them with farms. Theoretically, this should feed everyone, and there would be enough that nobody would starve. But not all land is equally fertile, and farming was plagued with mismanagement. Eventually, all soil everywhere was depleted, and everyone died. "***Reset***," the LORD said, and all the Earth was back where it was when Adam and Eve were moved out of Eden.

This time, GOD instructed them to leave some forests, and taught them how to replenish the soil with things like compost or dead fish. Surely now the problems would be solved. Indeed, with more organized agriculture, granaries were built, and nations began to rise. Except these nations envied each other, and destructive wars killed all life on Earth. "***Reset***," the LORD said.

This time, humans were so afraid of messing up that they did little to disturb the land. So they did not cut down trees, nor build fires except from fallen branches. And they did not hunt animals for food. And they spent all their time ingesting mushrooms and smoking addictive substances. And humanity was not destroying itself, but neither was it progressing. Humans lacked that spark that GOD loved, for they were too afraid, having been warned of how easily they could be destroyed. GOD sighed, "***Reset.***"

And again. And again. And again. Either through violence, corruption, or apathy, mankind destroyed itself again and agai. And the LORD despaired that humanity would find itself able to manage. So despite that GOD wanted humans to do whatever made them happy, it clearly wasn't an option to allow total freedom. Some ground rules were needed, so the LORD had to guide progress.

THE STONE

CHAPTER 1

A long time ago, when the Earth was not yet formed, there were a man and a woman in a great star ocean. These were not yet humans, but more like angels, though people in later times would unfortunately worship them as gods. And GOD said to this man and this woman, "Grasp hold of this long spear, this pillar[177] that moves the stars. For as the stars turn, so also will the land you stir be made." Now this man was named Izanagi and the woman we will name Izanami,[178] and the LORD gave them the duty of deciding the shape of the land beneath the sky, for the island they stood was made by the LORD.

Izanami decided she wanted to go first, and she grabbed the pillar with both hands, and shook it up and down. And each time, and island appeared, and it was her child. And she named many islands from the land below. But these first islands were tiny and poorly formed. And the LORD said, "Izanagi, don't let her do all the work! It is unmanly! You also must grab the pillar firmly, and stir to make the islands." And when they worked together, it was a massive result. The great continents of the world were made. But after the largest, Izanami breathed her last, for she was exhausted.[179]

Now Izanagi loved his wife very much, and as a reward for his work in the creation, the LORD allowed him to visit his wife in the Afterlife, and to bring her back. "Take care," the LORD said, "For there are many rules about this sort of thing. These rules that I have established are to prevent the chaos of the Abyss. You will only get one chance to do this correctly." So the man Izanagi pushed away a stone,[180]

---

[177] There's a bit of visual imagery to unpack here. It's a phallic symbol, obviously, and it's also supposed to represent the way the Milky Way stars spiral around Earth each night.

[178] Or "Man Who Invites" and "Woman Who Invites." But for purposes of this story, we're implying that all these names are Japanese pseudonyms for the real names of angels.

[179] Yes, this is all a sexual metaphor.

[180] Pay attention to the references to pushing away a stone, these are JESUS parallels. There are three of them, each a different rescue: from death, from danger, and from sadness.

and entered the cave to the underworld to see his wife. And at the entrance, there was a peach orchard, and he grabbed some fruits to give to her as a gift.
Now the messenger of the underworld told Izanagi, "You wife bids you wait under all preparations are made." So Izanagi waited, eating a peach each day because he was hungry, but he lost patience before three days[181] had passed. And he rushed in, for he longed to see her face. Instead, his wife had the face of a hideous corpse, actively being devoured by insects and maggots. And her anger to turned toward him as she screamed, "The LORD of Heaven was preparing to restore my body and spirit. Why could you not have waited another day?!? Now everything has been ruined!" And she chased after him to drag him also to the underworld, but Izanagi tossed her the last peach and his gift shocked her out of her rage, and she returned to the depths of the underworld. To this day, peach fruit and its wood are considered a ward against misfortune and evil. As for the husband and wife? Well, angels don't really die of old age. But GOD did allow another couple for visit during Tanabata festival, so it's possible they may meet again.

CHAPTER 2

Now after this, Izanagi washed himself, and three children were born from his body. And the LORD gave these children a task, for they were angels in charge of various functions so that GOD did not have to constantly recreate the Earth. GOD set his angel who is named Amaterasu in charge of the sun, the one who is called Tsukuyomi in charge of the moon, and the third one Susano, GOD put in charge of storms.[182] Susano was an angel, but this was at a time before Nephilim had ruined everything with regard to love between angels and humans, so angels could still have families. And he fell in love with a beautiful local spirit[183] girl named Kushinada, for there were as of yet no humans. Unfortunately, this was also at a time when monsters roamed the Earth.
The family of Kushinada was under threat, as each of their eight daughters so far had been eaten by a serpent with as many heads known as Orochi, and she was the last daughter on the menu. And Susano had seen her many times, but when he went to meet her, her parents said she had been taken to Orochi's lair this very morning. And so, Susano made his way to the lair of Orochi, and rolled away the stone.
And he found Kushinada in holding, for Orochi's henchmen were preparing appetizers. Susano snuck Kushinada out by switching clothing with her. The henchmen never reported any men entering or exiting, so when a "man" entered and left they cared nothing of it, for they were mere goblins. Goblins are very crafty when something is personally at stake, but they terrible as guards, because the care only for their own agenda. And the trolls that guarded the gate were downright stupid, being ordered only make sure the women didn't escape, and couldn't see through the flimsiest of disguises. Kushinada returned to her parents, and she vowed that if he ever made it back to her, she was gonna marry that boy some day.
As for Susano, he plied Orochi with alcohol, until each head became thoroughly drunk, and passed out. It was then that Susano chopped its heads off. Returning to her home, Susano was greeted by Kushinada, who said, "Before you ask for my hand in marriage, I think I'd like my clothes back."

CHAPTER 3

Amaterasu, Susano's sister, was a very warm and kind angel. But she was known to get offended. And her brother Susano once upset her so much that she hid herself in a cave. And for a long time, she sat and sulked in a cave. But the angels of Heaven and the spirits of the Earth sorta kinda noticed that the Earth was shrouded in perpetual darkness, and the angels cried out to GOD.[184]
One day, outside the cave, she heard the sounds of a festival. There were sounds of the flute and of drums, and people were clearly enjoying themselves. Her curiosity got the better of her, and she rolled away the stone in from of the cave. And the sun came out again. Amaterasu asked, "What's the occasion of this festival?" And the LORD said, "Those I created often never realize how much impact they have on others, whether they are humans or spirit or angels." But Amaterasu asked, "What are

[181] That particular addition is definitely influence from Christianity.
[182] In Hebrew lore, Uriel and Sariel are the angels that watch over the sun and moon.
[183] *Anima loci*, or beings that function as the "soul" of a natural area. Like faeries, except faeries are more like helpers for a place rather than the whole of the place.
[184] If you ever needed to know whether angels and other supernatural beings pray to GOD, they do.

you talking about?" And GOD said, "*You*. You bring joy to everyone. Your radiant presence brings warmth to the land. That is why I created you." And so, Amaterasu joined the party that was in her honor. All who think they are not important or that the world can do without you, remember that this is not what GOD thinks.

THE FALL OF ANIMALS

At the time of Adam and Eve, animals such as the snake could speak with human, but they are no longer intelligible. Those reading may wonder, what changed? Well... part of it was that they had consumed the fruit of Knowledge of Good and Evil. Since humans understood Good and Evil, but animals were still subject to GOD's creation, they were a separate being, and had no longer any understanding of each other. But it goes beyond that.

First of all, the LORD determined that, "It is not right for mankind to know their own history," unlike evil humans who try to suppress history, GOD's motive was benign, "for humans could make decisions concerning their past based on fear or hope, and not because of genuine desire." For the LORD had allowed humans free will, and to allow them decisions based on the worldview of animals would mean they deferred to the knowledge animals had about Good and Evil, which were different from that of humans. So it was better if humans did not understand reality in the same way as humans. But GOD briefly considered allowing humans who were particularly close to nature to have some understanding anyway, for they had few other people to talk to in this case.

But one day, everything changed when animals themselves sinned, for all have fallen short of the grace of GOD. It happened like this: with the general rise in human wickedness, all around them, animals saw that humans were eating them. Now at the time, animals were sentient creatures with high levels of reasoning, who could hold sophisticated discussions concerning science or philosophy. But as they observed humans eating them, some of them developed goofy ideas like "survival of the fittest!"[185] and "kill or be killed!" and also "eat or be eaten!" And so, with their zero sum mentality, the first carnivores came about. And because eating meat requires a significant portion of the prey animal's life cycle to mature, the best predators found themselves in a near constant state of starvation. And the land became barren. And GOD looked down on what they had done, and told them, "You were intelligent creatures, but you have behaved like savage animals. Because of this, you will be savage animals. I will give your intelligence to your prey, and I will protect them with a high birth rate. You will become dumb brutes, except those of you who have befriended man." And this is why creatures like cats and dogs are extremely intelligent, while some of the other predators are dumb as bricks. These brute animals had lost touch with what it is to feel kindness for other animals. They had become cruel and unfeeling, so GOD made them like this. Yet, even so, GOD favors both the righteous and the wicked, and causes sun and snow on their behalf. Is a cat evil because it kills? Or a rat evil because it steals food? Yet GOD loves them both, even if they do what is wrong. And so predator and prey remained alive. Yet even so, they could no longer tell their human companions about their experiences. But once in awhile, a human with a loving hear can learn to listen.

THE TALE OF THE FOX

In ancient days before GOD became jealous, the people worshiped gods.[186] And these gods were people who pretended to be gods. GOD worked a franchising system, where each person agreed to give worship to GOD in order for favor.[187] But one man who was granted a domain over weather refused to tell anyone that it wasn't him who ultimately had the power. This man's name was Ishkur. As he gathered followers, ultimately the LORD decided he had enough of this farce, and his life ended. After this, GOD was jealous and no new gods were made, though some pretended nonetheless. However, to show that this power wasn't Ishkur's to begin with, GOD made it drought for years. As the crops withered, the people prayed to the gods for relief, but none of them would help, for they were nothing more than mortal impostors. At last, Ishkur's father, a man named Enlil, called to GOD, for he knew the truth. "LORD," he said, "You have given power to these gods. Never mind the weather, just please give me back my son!"

---

[185] Here I'm poking fun of the theories of the followers of Darwin. Darwin himself didn't originally say this though.
[186] This is adapted from a Sumerian myth in Nippur known as Ni 12501.
[187] That is to say, spiritual abilities.

And the LORD saw he was earnest, as the man did not only pray for his son but worked hard to show others that the gods had no real power. Indeed, these men who pretended to be gods found they had no power at all to kill or even hurt the father. And GOD was pleased.
That night, GOD sent him a vision in a dream. In the dream he saw himself approaching a fox, and the fox helped rescue the son. He didn't understand it, but the man had faith. He approached a fox, but this one ran off. But he noticed that though the dream was in black and white, the fur pattern wasn't quite right. So he tried others until he found one that matched. But this fox, as all foxes are, was strange. For some reason, the fox led him an area between the window of a building and the mouth of a nearby cave. And then it sat down and yawned. The man realized in an odd way it was telling him to wait, so he hunted a bird and prepared a meal. The fox grabbed his food, and after eating most of it, motioned for the man to take a leg and a feather from the bird.
Night came, and the moon's light created a shadow from the building to the cave that resembled a doorway. The fox scratched as if to be let in. So the man touched the shadow, and it swung open a gate to Sheol.
Inside the realm, the guests were being shown to a banquet by the dead. Now the man was hung on account of his food being stolen, but before he made it to the food the man nipped him. It shook its head, and the man realized that anything in this world had a price; trying to take anything, even something that was being offered required payment. If not, the price was to become trapped in the Afterlife. And the fox sternly warned the man all of this, but yapping at him. Instead, the fox distracted them, and the man was able to stuff some bread in his bag. Likewise, a bathing pool was in the next room, but the man was stopped from bathing. As he approached the water, some specters arose from the water and tried to grab him. But this time the fox's howl scared them off, and he was able to put some in his waterskin. So the man passed many such ordeals in Sheol.
There was a long room where the floor started to collapse, and the man wanted to run, but the fox motioned for him to ignore it and headed off to the side. The man was getting nervous, but ultimately he was standing on what appeared to be nothing all. A staircase of pure light appeared, and the man and the fox climbed. After this, the man stood before a scale. On the right side was a soul that was obviously Ishkur's. But the left side was empty. Nearby was a plaque that read this inscription, «Give the offering to settle the balance. If the soul weighs more, it will be consumed. If you acquire the soul, it must be given form and sustenance.» So the man wondered, "What can I offer the scales? Surely, I need something much heavier than the soul!" But as he searched, the fox snatched something from his bag and dropped it on the scale. The man was horrified as he realized that the object had been only a feather,[188] but to his shock, the soul turned out lighter than a feather.
The next room had a platform where he set the soul, and then set to work. There was a bowl and plate, but after he filled the bowl from his waterskin, the fox ran off with his bag. It sniffed at the bird's leg and pointed to it with its paw. It took a long time to realize what the fox was trying to say. The leg was still bloody, on account of being raw, but it also had skin, meat and bone. The man added these to the platform, one at a time, and he watched as his son's bones, muscle, flesh, and blood reconstituted. And the soul entered the body once again, and the breath of his spirit came upon him, and he lived.[189] After this, the man placed the bread and water, and he ate. And the three of them made their way back to the world of the living.
Enlil and his son Ishkur were about to feed the fox and go on their way, when something mysterious happened. The fox began to glow, and it became a beautiful human woman. "Thank you for saving me," the woman said. This confused Enlil, "We should thank you! You saved my son!" But the woman shook her head, "No, I must thank you. My name is Gu Mi Ho.[190] I was a foxy vixen who used my beauty to manipulate men. But the LORD had enough of this, and turned me into an animal to teach me a lesson. It was when I decided to aid you that the LORD agreed to undo my curse." And so it was that the man and the woman married each other and took care of their father for the rest of his days.

---

[188] From Egyptian myth, the soul is weighed against a feather.
[189] The Sumerian and Mesopotamian myths tended to devalue resurrection stories, but this was a rare story where even without Christianizing it, the incomplete text appears to suggest that.
[190] Gumiho (구미호) are ninetailed foxes of Koren myth, known for eating human livers.

Mystery of the Ancient Kingdom

In ancient times was the kingdom of Babel. And to understand it, we must understand how it came to be. This was a kingdom with memories from before the Great Flood. The people involved did not themselves survive the Flood, but their history was carefully preserved so that generation after generation knew it. This is not because it was edifying or valuable, quite the contrary. God allows all people perfect freedom, even the freedom to oppose.

Now Babylon was rebuilt by Nimrod, a survivor of the flood of the line of Ham, and we are aware of the building of the Tower of Babel and how language was mixed. The kingdom of Babylon was among the nations that the angels known as Annunaki had meddled with.[191] They had money and complex architecture, and all manner of technology. And they brought with them all manner of other secrets that are taught in secret societies like the Wiccans and Freemasons. These societies oppose God.

That they were one of the kingdoms influenced by wicked angels and swarming with massive giants was not notable. The notable thing was that its history survived the Flood. It recorded the rule by the Annunaki, and retained the gods and goddesses that were venerated. The laws and technology made the land appear much more advanced than those around it, though the truth was that it had a cheat sheet, a guide from a previous age in the form of salvaged records. As we know, Babylon was a powerful rival against the people of God throughout their history.

But what about before the Flood? Well, about that. Before the rains came down, the land was covered in a thick mist, from waters that were above the Earth and waters that were under the Earth. And these mixed together, to form the mists that gave all plants and the people living there moisture and life. And they called it "living water"[192] for with it. And there were wise people[193] who could weave Mist in order to work miracles through faith in God. These people felt the blessing of God, for anything they desired to make was created, and any sickness could be healed.

And in these days, there was no drowning, for the waters were thin, filled with oxygen to such a point that even if you dove into the ocean, you could breathe reasonably well. And the waters under the Earth and the waters above the Earth pervaded with the power of God. But when the Annunaki directed the growth of people, they impressed upon them instead they idea that their lot was decided by fate, and that the source of power was in *things*.[194] And the power they taught was illusion and destruction, slavery and want. So the people of Babylon began to make necklaces and chains, anklets and bracelets, and the more they made, the more what they made began to resemble manacles. And they trusted in the stars and the patterns of the sun and moon, and not in the Lord who made the sun and moon. And while the wise ones used the power of Mist to remind them that the presence of God was all around them, the people of Babylon were led by their fear. They were told that water causes people to drown, and that they ought to cover their faces in order that they should not breathe it in.[195] So it was that they began to thirst, for their hearts were not filled.

And this teaching became what is known as Mystery Babylon, for the word mystery comes from *mysterium*, which refers to "secrets" or "to conceal." All of this idea returns to attempts to make a physical barrier to hide one's face from God. And even to this day, the women of the countries previously associated with the lands of Babylon still practice this custom. But it should not be so with you. Remember, "what you have been told in secret, shout from the rooftops." Do not live your life in hiding and fear, nor mask your true self from others.

The Seal and the Secret

The Lord set a sign in the heavens after it flooded, showing a rainbow in the sky that never again would the Earth be flooded. But there is more to the story than most people know. Now the angels who corrupted the early humans have been awaiting their punishment, for God intended their eventual redemption. They are the planets consigned to their path in the skies.

---

[191] The Annunaki themselves were driven into the Abyss, though unlike the Nephilim whose bodies were destroyed (becoming disembodied demons), the Annunaki mostly retained their physical forms, but they became earthbound or "fallen" angels.

[192] Tying a parallel between the granted mist of the antediluvian period with the gift that Jesus promises.

[193] That is, *wizards* or *magi*. This is a fantasy story explaining magic, and its fall.

[194] *Sorcery* refers to "fate" and "fortune." This is also a jab against Calvinism. The idea being that wisdom was distorted.

[195] And this is a rather obvious reference to COVID hysteria. As an additional side note, it parallels with what Jesus said about living water. Essentially, the public is convinced that something that is from God and brings life is bad for them.

And the demonic souls are to be redeemed as well. They were in the Abyss, and their souls only were able to go free, to possess the living. For the LORD intended that the wicked learn about mortal life. The humans needed conflict with evil to learn and grow, and the demons themselves needed to experience life to be redeemed.

But deep beneath the sea, there is a prison unlike the Abyss. While the Abyss is a place of darkness beneath the sea, the LORD did intend what is sealed in the prison to ever be released. For in those days, there were giants among the Earth. But today, no longer do the Nephilim walk the Earth, for their bodies were imprisoned from age to age.[196] And this is the location of the prison: it is smooth rock nearby of the consistency of basalt, there are hot vents springing like geysers from the ocean floor, and the prison is unbreakable material like as of ice guarded on all sides by pillars of fire, and underneath, the life inside is not fully alive yet cannot die, for the breath of life is still within.[197] Herein lie the Monsters,[198] may they rest in peace.

Ancient text holds a conspiracy though, a question that the public is afraid to ask. The Book of Enoch talked about this sealed prison. But the Book of Enoch was suppressed by the Catholic church for centuries, with its writings coming to light only because Ethiopia never received this order. The ancient Sumerian writings talk about how the reason for the flood was that humanity was too noisy. But one older copy of the text uses the word "contaminated." It seems as though time and again, the text gets altered in a very specific way. Almost as though those in power always want to lead away from the question, "What if maybe the contamination wasn't washed away?" Well, we know the answer to this. Humans are no longer the slaves the Annunaki wanted, they are a new creation, but the corruption is no longer at the point where the world needed to be flooded. The Nephilim will never again walk the Earth, for they were too large; though the giants of the *anakim* did still roam the lands to the north. But the hope of salvation exists, not only for humans, but for angels and all other souls. As for the other life created by forbidden love, it can no longer mix with humanity, for the rules have changed.[199] In order to change life, it now must be made sick. A healthy body will resist attempts to change it.[200] When things are like in the days of Noah, the LORD will be here.

ACCUSATION OF THE SINNER

CHAPTER 1

The man went into the wilderness. He was a sinner of notorious deeds. Perhaps you've heard of him, as he and his wife were known collectively as Adam and Eve. And he was very hungry, because he had been driven out of the Garden, and the wilderness had a scarcity of food, because it had not yet rained, though a mist blanketed the land. And the man began to imagine the stones as bread, and he was about to munch on some, for so great was his hunger, when Eve reminded him that it was stones. And Adam realized he was seeing things. And Satan accused him,[201] "You wouldn't be in this mess if you had just decided not to eat from the Tree that GOD commanded you not to touch!" And Adam felt miserable, but because he couldn't lay a hand on Satan, he took it out on his wife, saying, "It's all your fault we are in this wilderness! I should never have loved you!" And they had a heated argument. And the man named Adam was tempted to dominate over his wife, for he was irritated at her disobedience, and how it had turned him away from GOD. For you see, one sin led to another, and he was miserable. But Satan said, "Will you also build cities to rule over the world, as the Annunaki have

---

[196] There is no intention to *ever* release the bodies of the Nephilim. Their souls can possibly be redeemed, but their bodies are so enormous that they have a very real threat of consuming all life on Earth.

[197] This was described in the Book of Enoch. It was heavily suppressed by the authorities. The fear was that people will look for it, or that it *will* be released and involved in their removal from authority. More important though is that a real story of the past is told so people don't have a sanitized Bible. Oceanographers have found bacterial in the deep in a state of extreme dormancy.

[198] The Nephilim strongly influenced ideas of Lovecraft. You can consider this prison Ry'leh.

[199] Similar to how horses and donkeys can mix, but their children (mules) don't have even chromosomes, angels and humans can't mate. Even with genetic engineering, there are specific laws about what can form. The main one is that giants that form among the people stay within tolerable limits, so you get anakim not Nephilim. Beastkin, djinn, and álfar do not make crossbreeds, only purebloods. They stay distinct and recessive. There is a safeguard to ensure humanity stays human.

[200] Genetic sequencing needs a retrovirus to weaken its structure, meaning all GMOs are unhealthy enough to give us pause.

[201] Satan is an accuser, not a tempter. We accuse Satan in turn, because we cannot bear responsibility for our sins, so we blame and (literally) demonize the messenger.

done? The LORD shows me your future, and I only see the worst.[202] Children from Eve's womb shall rule in this way, and they will turn the world to ruin and destruction." And Adam buckled under this criticism, and he sought to end his life.[203] And Satan piled on more criticism of how weak he was for giving up, but this time Adam stopped listening. Taking a sharp stone, he set about to cut himself. But GOD said, "Stop! Do not end your life!" And GOD proved that he would angels charge over him, so that he would not even hit his feet against a stone. And even though he was put to the test, again and again, GOD spared Adam, until finally he realized, "The LORD indeed has not given up on me." And Adam lived as one who had received forgiveness from GOD, and the outpouring of such was shared with his wife. He loved her deeply, and in time, they bore children. And Adam and Eve lived in the love of the LORD, all the days of their life. In Adam, all sinned, but through GOD was redemption.

CHAPTER 2

Now there was once a man whose life was adrift. He had no job, little money, and a loved one? What a joke! Every woman that he met mocked him. He was a worm and no man.[204] In anguish, the man cried out, but not in prayer. "Someone, anyone! I don't care if I have to trade for my very soul! Just please answer my desire." Now, ordinarily this might have caught the attention of the spirits known as *djinn*, but this day Satan was bored beyond belief. For humans had done nothing worth criticism in many days.[205]

Let it be understood that Satan does not tempt people. Humans are perfectly capable of finding sin all on their own, and free will is something sacred to GOD. There is no way that Satan can tell someone to do something that he does not already want to do. So when Satan arrived in a comely human female form,[206] the man was all too happy to explain just how Satan could fix his life.

And so, a contract was drawn up:

> I, SATAN, AGREE THAT YOU, THE UNDERSIGNED, HEREBY BEQUEATH YOUR IMMORTAL SOUL IN EXCHANGE FOR WEALTH OF SOME SORT, GAINFUL EMPLOYMENT, AND A GIRLFRIEND WOULD BE REALLY NICE. YOU AGREE NOT TO CANCEL THE CONTRACT, OR YOU WILL BE LIABLE FOR ADDITIONAL CHARGES. IF YOU OR I SHOULD TELL ANYONE ABOUT THIS DEAL, YOU WILL BE CONSIDERED IN BREACH OF CONTRACT, IN WHICH EVENT, THE SOUL IN QUESTION IS OWED TO MYSELF, BUT ALL OBLIGATIONS TO FULFILL THE EXCHANGE WILL THEREAFTER BE CONSIDERED UNNECESSARY. IF THE DEAL COMES INTO LEGAL CONTEST, BOTH PARTIES AGREE TO HIRE A REPRESENTATIVE FROM SATAN'S OWN LAW FIRM.
>
> _____ (*Your Name*)

And Satan told him to sign his name as #302875106592253[207] for he was very busy with other appointments. And so the trade was made, one soul for a successful job, an attractive girlfriend, and whatever he could think of on in terms of wealth. And the man hadn't read the contract, because human beings as a species cannot abide even a paragraph of legal print or medical warnings. So it was that he didn't realize the terms of the deal were extremely weighted.

And for awhile, things indeed seemed to be going well. The man had many fine things, such as fine rugs, windows made of pure amethyst, a job that paid obscenely, and the woman of (as he believed) his dreams. And he told nobody about the deal. But since the deal included the clause that Satan himself could mention it, Satan told everyone. And the banks foreclosed on his house, because it was considered purchased under false pretenses. And the woman wanted nothing to do with a man who would willingly bargain his soul, and treat her like a trophy to be earned. And the job that had hired him now wondered if their free will had been tampered with. And Satan laughed at him, "You have been found to be in breach of contract! As part of the agreement, you lose everything. Your soul is due in a week, and I'll be taking back what I gave you." When he asked how he had breached the contract, Satan explained the clause that if either party told about the deal, he was considered to have violated it. And all was erased, as though it had been nothing more than an illusion.

---

[202] Literally. The LORD sees the best future for Adam, whereas Satan only sees the accusation.
[203] Same temptation as JESUS, but for a different reason. JESUS feels uncertain as to how to do GOD's will after realizing that power is the wrong path. Adam accepts the accusation, and wants to die.
[204] This turn of phrase is from a psalm about persecution. Basically, this guy is a miserable wretch.
[205] This is a joke. If humans went even a week without someone failing GOD, this would be a miracle.
[206] Inspired by *Bedazzled*, of course. Which is more or less the inspiration for this story.
[207] This is thirteen to the thirteenth power. It's used here to provide a sort of dehumanization, as he's not a name but a number.

And the man set on the beach, grieving. The LORD came to Asher[208] and asked him, "Why are you so sad?" And Asher explained his decision, and how he ruined his life. He fully expected that this time next week, he would be a mindless puppet, or dead, or whatever it meant to give up your soul. But the LORD laughed. And Asher felt like he should be insulted, but there was something lighthearted about this laughter, not at all like the mocking he had felt from the women, and not accusing like Satan. "Don't you know? Your soul is the *Ruach ha Kodesh,* the Spirit of GOD. It isn't yours to give, it isn't Satan's to take, and Satan works for me as an accusing angel. He doesn't even have the ability to do that, much less the authority! Why don't you think about what you really want in this life, and work towards it, and I will make it happen. Now go ahead and cancel that contract, okay?" Asher was confused, but GOD said it would be a learning experience.

So Asher went to the law office of Satan, Lucifer, and Morningstar and asked to see the contract in question. He began to rip it in front of Satan, though Satan reminded him that as satisfying as that is, a contract is about the agreement, not the physical piece of paper.[209] "In that case, I'm stating that I want to cancel the contract," he said. But Satan told him, "The fines for termination is quite extensive! You'll have to pay back double what you were given! And then 150% interest, and percentile fees for the rest of your life. Are you sure you agree to this?" And the man was filled with immense dread at the prospect of paying for the rest of his natural life. But the man said, "What does it profit a man to gain the whole world and lose his soul? Is anything worth more than your soul?" At this, Satan giggled, and this time their laugh was playful. "You are too priceless! Did you not realize that these charges were based on doubles or percents? Double of what? Percent of what? I never gave you anything, and I never took anything! I just wanted to mess with you, and you made it so easy!" And as Asher walked away, he could hear continued laughter.

And so it was that Asher found that his sins were redeemed by GOD. And afterwards, this experience changed him. He no longer allowed life to miserable, and he sought after his dreams. He worked hard and became a carpenter, he met a woman who was kind to him, and Asher grew old with many children, and great were the number of his days.

THE ERASURE OF ER

Behold, this is the story of the one man whose name the LORD erased, and be thankful, for all other names are in the LORD's book of Life. Now Jacob had twelve sons: Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Zebulun, Dan, Joseph, Benjamin, Naphtali, Gad, and Asher. And Judah was the ruling line, where David came from, the line that was favored by GOD. But all of us have failed and proven sinful before GOD, and even though JESUS himself is of the line of Judah, so also one the worst men.

Now the firstborn of Judah, a man named Er grew up in the shadow of a time where every name in the land of Israel proclaimed the LORD, and every tongue confessed his name. And yet, Er tried to worship both GOD and the gods of Canaan. And he married a woman of Canaan, in violation of the LORD's commandment not to mix with the people of seven nations of their enemies (the Hethite, the Girgashite, the Amorite, the Canaanite, the Perizzite, the Hivite, and the Jebusite).

Now the woman who he married, Tamar, was a woman who loved the LORD. But he married her in order to spite the LORD. And so, two fires raged in his heart, the fire of his covenant for the LORD, and the fire of his longing for a woman of foreign gods who hated GOD, a woman who wasn't Tamar but what she represented. He was like a man with two wives, who thought he could give both his attention. But the LORD disagreed, and put him to death. For the rot had reached the core. For the LORD is jealous, and the two traditions incompatible. For the man cheated on GOD. And so, he was *erased*.[210] Our sins are forgiven, but we cannot both love and hate the LORD, for it will tear us apart.

As for the line of Judah, the story continues. The Levirate marriage commanded that if the firstborn gives no heir and dies, that the next brother is to bear a child. And even though Tamar was a Canaanite, the LORD loved her and she loved the LORD. But the second son, Onan did not love the LORD, and spilled his seed instead of giving Tamar a son. So the LORD also put him to death, through sickness.[211]

---

[208] Asher carries the meaning "blessed by GOD." The idea being that far from a meaningless number, he's a beloved person.
[209] This is true. Contrary to Hollywood, you can't just cancel by ripping the contract.
[210] Look, a pun. Er-ased?
[211] From sexual exhaustion, presumably.

After this, Judah's next son was Shelah, but he was too young, so she was sent back to her father's household to live as a widow until she grew up. But she thought to herself, "What if he also dies? Or what if by then, I am too old to bear children?' And Judah resolved in his heart that he would not give her Shelah, for he feared that the LORD ending their lives might be her fault.
Time passed, and Judah's wife died. After Judah recovered from his grief, he went to Timnah in order shear his sheep. And Tamar was told where he went. And she decided to obey the command to bear children, the promise that Judah had not kept. So, taking off her mourning robes, she disguised herself with a veil, and went to the entrance of Enaim, on the road to Timnah, and she rode her to get ahead of him, so when he came, it appeared as though she had been there the whole day. And she asked him, "What will you give me to sleep with you?" she asked. And not realizing she was his daughter-in-law, he told her, "I will send a goat from my flock." But as a promise was not convincing without collateral, she asked, "What will you give me while you send it?" And he promised the seal of his signet ring and his walking staff,[212] and she slept with her the night and became pregnant. After this, she returned and took off her veil and put back her widow's clothes.
And Judah returned to the place to deliver the goat, but could not find her, and asked around, "Where is the shrine prostitute beside the road at Enaim?" But they assured him that there was no such shrine prostitute.[213] And he wanted to find her, because he owed a debt. But not long after, he heard his servants say, "Your daughter-in-law Tamar is guilty of prostitution, and as a result she is now pregnant." And he ordered her brought before him so she could be punished with death.
But as she was brought out, Judah gasped. On her finger was the ring with his seal, and in her hand was his staff. And Judah said, "She is more righteous than I, since I wouldn't give her to my son Shelah, and had gone to what I thought was a temple prostitute." And she had twin boys, Perez and Zerah. And Perez was the line in which David came from. And David's line is where JESUS came from, though it was not through the favored line of Solomon but from his mother's line. And this is the message of GOD, you can be born to a righteous family, but have your name erased from the story. And you can be a foreigner, of a line forbidden to mix with the people of GOD, but be remembered always for your obedience before GOD. This is not the story of GOD's condemnation of Er, but a story of the LORD's willingness to find a way to make his will of salvation happen despite human rebellion. If GOD can redeem a family line broken by sin, what can GOD bring to your life?

THE HORSE RAN AWAY

In the days before GOD was widely known, an old widowed man lived in a village with his young son. He worked his farm with his horse, and he knew not to take life for granted. His son was supported by the crops the old horse worked, for he was too young yet to help his father.
One day, the old man awoke to find the gate broken, and the horse had run off. The villagers sympathized with him, "Terrible! What misfortune!" But the old man said, "Maybe this is a good thing."
About a week later, many horses from the foreign land came, and the man had no shortage of horses to grow food. And the child grew up with plenty to eat, and leisure to learn to ride. The villages praised him, "Prosperity! What fortune!" But the old man said, "Maybe this is a bad thing."
Time passed, and the boy grew to his teenage years, and he tried a willful force. He was thrown, and the horse trampled on his leg. The villagers sympathized with him, "Disaster! How will you recover?" But the old man said, "Maybe this is a good thing."
Now the countrymen from the foreign land came after the horses, and able bodied villagers were recruited to fight. But the boy's legs were still broken, and the man was too old. The war was long and bloody, and few survived. And the villagers noticed the two survived, and they said, "This was a blessing in disguise." The old man and the young man said, "Maybe..."
We humans try to predict the future the way that we think events will go. But the LORD makes good from evil, and also works misfortune that we grow. Who then are we to say what will happen?[214]

---

[212] This is not exactly how the story goes, but I wanted to create a parallel with the concept of a wedding ring. Originally, it was a staff, a seal, and a cord. But a signet ring is what people later use as signs of lineage, and it fits better.
[213] At this time, the pagan temples, particularly those of Ishtar, had prostitutes as part of their temple tradition. So Judah has left behind his tradition, to go be with one he thinks is a pagan prostitute, and he gave symbols of his heritage and authority.
[214] The reason that end-times prophecies are a nonstarter. Trying to predict final events with a human perspective doesn't

QUEST FOR IMMORTALITY

In ancient times, a man named Kad'mon[215] lived in a wondrous city known as Uruk. Seven sages had blessed it, it was built from blackened bricks, and the people were wise and mighty. And the LORD has blessed this man, making him a mighty hero. And they made him a king after many mighty exploits, and called him Kad'mon-Gibur. But although the city was filled with great and wonderful things, the people followed the false idols popular among the pagans. And the people did not know the LORD. So the city was plagued by a mighty behemoth known as Chonbaaba[216] who continually would try to smash the walls, and hero after hero tried to stop him. And the walls were surrounded by dead heroes, to the extent where there was a wall of sorts made of dead against the wall built by the living. And the people were frightened. And they prayed to their gods, but people continued to die. In desperation, they prayed, "Please, anyone who will listen, save this city." And the LORD recognized their prayer.

Now Kad'mon-Gibur did not know the name of the LORD, but he refused to believe that things of clay and stone had anything to do with the creation of the Earth. One day, while he was spending time with his many mistresses, for such was the life of a king, the LORD sent a dog beastkin, for in those days before the flood, the beastkin were becoming common. And her name was Bitzet'kanim for she had come from the reed marshes.[217] And she was wild and tough, for she thought only of fighting and sex. And for a long time, she lived alone in the marshes but a shepherd tamed her enough to speak. Eventually she made her way to the city of Uruk, and she challenged all who stood in her way, whether soldiers at the gate or guards of the palace. At last she made it to where Kad'mon-Gibur lived, and challenged him to a wrestling match. The fight lasted for days, before the two of them ended it with sex. And a feast. In those days, such was the life of kings.

And Enkidu encouraged him to fight Chonbaaba, "I have heard from the men at the gate that people suffer constantly from the repeated attacks of this creature. Let us go forth, as both of us have been blessed with great strength. Surely we will prevail against it together." So they went, Kad'mon-Gibur hauling many spears that were tipped with silver, and Bitzet'kanim with only her sharp nails and teeth. The battle began as the creature approached the city, and Bitzet'kanim leaped on its back and bit and scratched it, keeping it distracted enough that Chonbaaba was impaled by spear after spear. To this day, silver is seen as a defense against supernatural beings that are called monsters. At last, the battle was won.

If the people praised him before with his deeds of heroism, Kad'mon-Gibur was now regard as a child of the gods, claiming that his mother was a goddess named Ninsun. While the LORD had blessed him and his friend before this, these words angered him. And he did not argue with them, since he had not known the name of the LORD. So GOD punished him by arranging the death of his friend. While she seemed fine during the battle, biting the flesh of this creature had actually poisoned her. As she got weaker and weaker, Bitzet'kanim begged Kad'mon-Gibur to live his life and be happy. But he could not. He prayed to each of the idols in the city, but none of them would help her recover. Then she breathed her last.

And he was despondent over her death. He hired necromancers, shamans, and all manner of people who claimed to be spiritual, but none could heal death itself. And he despaired that one day death would happen to him. "Please, our king!" the people of Uruk cried, "Her body has a stench that is attracting flies and wild animals! Bury her body, before our land is cursed with sickness." Eventually, they prevailed upon him, but he was not satisfied, so he told the people, "I go on a journey in order to find the cure for death. Choose for yourself a king while I am gone." And with that he went away.

He rowed his boat for many days, and came to a far away island. And there he traveled for many days, encountering strange things. He crossed a gate where the sun set, and had to outrun the flames. He swam past a river where the dead grasped for him with their hands. And at one point, he walked across land that was like the night sky. Each night, he rested, and the LORD visited him in a dream.

---

work.

[215] Kad'mon Gibur is a Hebrew form of the name Gilgamesh, meaning "The ancestor is a hero." His original name means "ancestor."

[216] In Sumerian legends, this is Hunbaba. I altered the name a bit.

[217] This name is similar to Enkidu but in Hebrew.

"It is not the destiny of man to live forever," the LORD said the first night. The second night, he was told, "Your beloved friend is in a land reserved for those who have died. Return to you people, and be happy." And many other words were said, night after night, urging him to live his life. But since he persisted, GOD allowed him to continue. At the very last, he found what he had sought. There was a man named Humetzahiyim[218] who according to legend had discovered immortality with his wife. So he asked the man, "What is the secret to life?" And he told him the meaning of life. This infuriated Kad'mon-Gibur, who demanded, "No, I mean, how is it that you have lived so long?!?" Humetzahiyim said to him, "Some time ago, I and my wife discovered that the LORD intends to flood the whole world. The LORD does not want anyone to know about it, so I vowed to keep his secret in exchange for the fruit of eternal life." At this, he was alarmed, "A flood is going to destroy the whole world?" But Humetzahiyim said to him, "Well, my wife and I, some man named Noah and his family, and a few others will survive. But humanity has become too corrupt. There are too many beastkin or Nephilim or other crossbreeds, and their line must diminish so that humanity may flourish."

And Humetzahiyim wanted to test him to see whether he could keep hold of life. Humetzahiyim asked him to stay awake for several days. But as he had walked and rowed for many days, he was completely exhausted. Thinking he might try to tell him that he had spent the time awake, Humetzahiyim baked one loaf of bread each day. Some were stale, some moldy, some burned, others just right, and the last was still being cooked when he finally woke. But Humetzahiyim had pity on him, and asked, "Do you give this for your own desires or for someone else?"

Kad'mon-Gibur said, "I will be honest. I started on this quest because a beastkin, a woman I had befriended, had died horribly. And I couldn't bear to watch her death. And I dreaded my own death as well, but if there is anything that would bring her back, I would have taken it." And Humetzahiyim was pleased, "It seems as though I can help you after all. This is the fruit of the Tree of Life, a fruit that is called The Old Are Young Again. Those who eat from it cannot pass on what they have eaten, for GOD will not spread disorder after what happened in the land they call Eden. But if GOD raises your friend, she will likely be barren, for this fruit is not intended as a means to circumvent his own plans. I do not have hopes for your success, but you can try to bring her back."

So he gave Kad'mon-Gibur the fruit, and bag to carry it in. And he walked back, and rowed to return to Uruk, hopeful with the prospect of bringing his friend back. He finished rowing, and was walking in sight of the city, when he stopped to rest. A snake slithered along and was about to bite him when the fruit caught its interest, for it smelled like flesh. Eating this fruit, it was so satisfied that it never would eat fruit again. And later, the snake shed its skin.[219]

As for Kad'mon-Gibur, he told the people of Uruk, "No longer call me king, and I am not Kad'mon-Gibur, for I am no hero after all. Call me Kad'mon as before." And he could not be consoled, but the people tried. "Look," they said, "look at this wondrous city. Look at its wall which gleams like copper! Go close to the temple of our goddess Ishtar, such as no later king or man ever equaled! Go up on the wall of Uruk and walk around, examine its foundation, inspect its brickwork thoroughly. Is it not made of blackened brick, and did not the Seven Sages themselves lay out its plans? This city of three leagues that Uruk and its encloses, see how majestic it is!" But he had no use for the goddess Ishtar who had not helped him at all, and he no use for the city and its bricks, and he had only a desire to sleep. And the LORD said, "This is the city I have planned for you instead, the city of the Kingdom of the LORD, where those who die will visit when I have established my reign. This is the land you will reside with your beloved. For now live, for your people love you." So it was that he lived his life for the rest of his days, and he never sought either immortality or death again, for he knew that the LORD had prepared a place for him.

UNFAITHFUL SAILOR

Back when people took to worshiping idols, instead of recognizing that GOD alone was in power, there lived one sailor who was exceptionally unfaithful. Even if these idols had power, the way he was going about things was completely unreasonable. For his mother, who was sick from a disease, he prayed to a god of sickness that she be healed. For his wife, he prayer to a god of marriage. For the woman he

[218] A Hebrew version of Utnapishtim, meaning "he has found life."
[219] Making this a just-so story.

was secretly seeing, he prayed to a god of stealth. For his own wealth, he prayed to a god of finances. But since he also had people who lent money to him, he prayed to a god of misfortune and another god of death that his debtors might have an untimely end. He prayed to the goddess of sea and storms when he went out sailing, and that the god of sun to ensure the weather wasn't miserable. And so on.

Now GOD already despised his idolatry, but he considered that man's prayers as one might a scoundrel who had too many lovers. It occurred to him that if he treated these gods as real, they ought to be extremely jealous. So GOD gave temporary life to the idols, so they could visit judgement upon him.[220]

The mother got better, and started being a busybody. She told the wife about the woman he was seeing, and the two got in a heated argument that ended with he man having no wife and no secret lover, and his mother nagging him constantly. As for his finances, the banks discovered that he had creditors, then the creditors suddenly died, and the banks called the police as foul play was suspected. He was going to be arrested when he insisted on the chance to clear his name. The bank agreed to drop the charges but only if they got their money within a week. And so he was stuck fishing to try to catch enough to pay off an enormous sum. He prayed to the idol for fishing, when the idol spoke, "I'm sorry, I can't do that. The LORD who has given me life for the moment tells me that you worship too many gods, and love none of them." So he continued to fish, yet he caught nothing. And then rain came, despite a sunny and clear day. And harsh waves and rains came, though there was no wind. And the man needed to unload cargo, for his ship would sink without intervention. But the food and water had all been tossed, and what was left was himself or the idols. And he couldn't bring himself to get rid of them. So it was the man jumped overboard, only to watch his ship sink to the bottom of the ocean, and these bits of wood and stone sank to the bottom. As for the man, he was rescued by a nearby boater. He never bought another statue.

Development of Man
THE LAW

CHAPTER 1

The LORD told Moses to go up with seventy elders of Israel and go worship. And Moses went alone to be with GOD, but they were not to come near. And Moses wrote the words of GOD, and all the ordinances that he was commanded to tell the people. And he built an altar near this mountain with twelve pillars for each of the twelve tribes of Israel. And the young men of Israel made blood sacrifices of the cattle to GOD. Moses put half of it in basins and half of it he sprinkled on the altar.[221] And Moses reminded the people of their covenant, and asked them to be obedient to the LORD. And they swore to GOD that they would be obedient, honest. Then Moses sprinkled the blood of the covenant on them, reminding them of their pledge.

Then Moses went up Mount Sinai, and a cloud covered the mountain. Then the glory of the LORD was like a great fire that devoured all things, yet Moses remained on the mountain for forty days and nights.

And while he was on the mountain, the LORD commanded him to make the ark of the covenant out of fine metals like gold and silver and bronze. And it was a chest with cherubim near the sides with gold rings that could be fitted with poles to carry it around. And he instructed him to build a Tent, a tent where the LORD's ark was placed while they travel, and he told the precise materials of both the ark and the Tent.[222] They were to travel with the LORD, and house his ark in a tent when they rested. He also gave Moses instructions on making an ephod, a coat for the priests to wear to honor GOD, and what offerings were acceptable for ceremonies to GOD. They were to offer meat, oil, and unleavened

---

[220] This is the ultimate problem of idolatry. GOD leaves you to your gods, that you aren't faithful to, and that have no power.

[221] The past rituals of Judaism were kinda gore-filled when looking at this in modern days. It was a major step up from the ancient human sacrifice cultures before that, though.

[222] You'll notice that I didn't mention the materials. The Bible thinks they matter, and spends excessive length on architecture porn, describing the jewels, cloth, and fine metals. Personally, I think fixating on such things is idolatry. If the LORD wants us to do something specific, we will know how to do it. Otherwise, our best is all that GOD needs.

bread to the LORD, and they were to do so while Aaron wore this ephod bearing the names of the tribes of Israel. They were also to make an altar to burn incense on every morning, to take a census for each living self and offer atonement money for sins, and to make a basin of bronze for washing the hands and feet of Aaron and other priests.

CHAPTER 2

During the forty days he was on the mountain, Joshua waited for him. At the slope of the mountain, a fox also waited. It saw the lights on the mountain above, and took a nap at the location, leaving only to hunt at night. For the forty days, it never had any reason to leave, for food and soft grass were available to it. And so it was that while the mountain raged, neither Joshua nor the fox ever left the location. And so they stayed and watched the outskirts of the mountain while GOD gave the law to Moses.[223] On the other hand, all down below the people made an idol of a golden calf, and this generation was destroyed, for they couldn't even keep the law while it was still being written. Now GOD had given Ten Commandments to the people of Israel. But because of their hardness of heart, Moses gave numerous addition laws below to them.

It happened in this way. The people waited forty days, at the base of the mountain, but some of them said, "This fire is not from the glory of the LORD! It is a volcano. I have heard of these things from the people of other lands. They tell us that these are places where heat from underground can be released, calling them ducts for the Earth's tears."[224] And they began to say that Moses had been burned to death, and was not returned. So they were rootless and without faith. And they came to Aaron, asking him to make them gods. And he refused, but they pressured him, and finally he caved in. Aaron said to them, "Take off the golden rings, which are jewelry of your wives, of your sons, and of your daughters. Bring them to me." So all the people took off the golden rings, and brought them to Aaron. He received what they handed him, and fashioned it with an engraving tool, and made it a golden calf in the likeness of the Egyptian god Apis. And they said, "These are your gods, Israel, which brought you up out of the land of Egypt."[225] Aaron built an altar before it and made a proclamation, saying, "Tomorrow will be a feast to this god." And the people rose up to offer burnt offerings to this Egyptian god who they said brought them out of the land of Egypt, then began to dance, drink, and party. The party itself devolved into an orgy. And some people were even robbed or killed as the party got out of hand.

And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, "Go down at once, for your people who you brought up out of the land of Egypt have corrupted themselves. You have given them my commandments, but they are turning aside from them, and engaging in perverse manner that breaks all of these laws. I have seen these people, and though I chose them, they are a stubborn and willful people. They believe they are chosen because they are better than all others. But no, I chose them because if I could redeem them, I could redeem anyone. Now let me alone. I have clearly failed, and I wish to destroy them, to the last man."[226] Moses looked around, and seeing some stones lying around, and asked the LORD if he could make a people of Israel from even these.[227] The LORD replied that there was nothing inherently exceptional about the Hebrew people, "What makes them exceptional is that of all the earth of the land, I chose rare samples to become human. And of all humans, I chose Adam's line to be my people. You are correct, I will simply choose another!"

But Moses stopped him, "Wait a minute, this is not what I meant! If your chosen people are chosen among chosen, doesn't that make them worth a great deal to you? What would all the people who

---

[223] I decided to include several fox segments as part of the text. I had watched Tezuka's *In The Beginning* anime, but then I found out the Bible naturally has several passages about foxes. There is JESUS talking about foxes having holes but him having no place to lay his head. Samson uses foxes to spread destruction among the Philistines. And other passages talk about buildings so weak that foxes are able to dig them apart, or them hanging around the ruins of Jerusalem. Unlike snakes, foxes are not considered evil creatures. They are, however, considered a symbol of humanity and its failing, and especially wandering hunter gatherer days before law. Their inclusion is part of an extended redemption metaphor.

[224] This phrase is from Johannes Kepler, famed astronomer. Although Kepler claimed to be Christian, I associate him with the slow crawl towards atheist "science."

[225] A sun god with a disc on its forehead. This would have been a sign of return to Egyptian bondage as well as idolatry.

[226] Ouch. This is a wry commentary on Jewish exceptionalism.

[227] I wanted as much as possible to create tie-ins to what JESUS said, so the fact that JESUS tells the Jewish leaders that GOD could make them from these stones fits.

worship other gods say about the Hebrew's GOD? Wouldn't the Egyptians themselves say, 'This GOD set plagues on us to free them from us, he brought them out of slavery, only to kill them? What manner of deity is this?!?' I beg you, please reconsider destroying these people. Didn't you also promise them descendants as many of the stars? You would be breaking your covenant!" GOD huffed for awhile, but ultimately decided his covenant and his love for his people were more important than his wrath. So he turned away from the disaster that he had wished on his people. The LORD told Moses, "I will not destroy all these people, but take your stone tablets, and go down to the people to speak to them." So Moses turned, and went down from the mountain with the two stone tablets of the LORD's Ten Commandments. And these tablets were the work of GOD and the writing of GOD himself. And Moses met Joshua and the fox (the latter of which appeared to be trying to sleep, but kept awake from the noise down below). Joshua said to Moses, "That noise isn't the sound of those who shout for victory, but it feels more like one being overcome by an enemy.[228] Why then does it sound like singing? What could be going on?" So they came closer to the camp with the fox tagging along, and Moses saw the calf and he grew enraged on behalf of the LORD. And he threw the stone tablets that the LORD had made at the golden idol. And the power of the LORD in those tablets melted the calf with blazing fire that engulfed any who were near to the idol, which scared the fox away for a time. And Moses collected the powder and the gold, and mixed it with water, and made the children of Israel drink it.

Then Moses asked Aaron, "What did these people do to you, and why did you sin on behalf of these people?" Aaron explained, "They told me, 'Make us gods, for this Moses, the man who brought us up out of the land of Egypt, has likely died.' And I refused, but they persisted, so I said to them, 'Whoever has any gold, let them take it off:' so they gave it to me; and I threw it into the fire, and out came this calf."[229] So Moses asked the people, "Who among you is on the LORD's side?" And some gathered from all tribes, but all of the sons of Levi gathered to him. So Moses instructed them, "Go, let everyone who is on the LORD's side take their swords and avenge against everyone who is not." And three thousand numbered the remainder of those who had sinned against the LORD, and these were slaughtered to the last man. Then Moses went up the mountain to make atonement for the sin.[230] And Moses carved a second set of stone tablets holding the Ten Commandments. And the people set up a Tent, and built the ark of the covenant, and turned back to their faith. And GOD was with them in their journeys as a pillar of fire by night and a cloud by day.

CHAPTER 3

Moses made his way with his people from Sinai, declaring that the LORD had said they had lived for too long in the mountains, and now they were to go to the lands of the Amorites, Canaanites, and the other lands sworn to their fathers Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. He told them to make their wise men into leaders, and this they did. They appointed wise men and captains and officers of their tribes. And these judges were appointed to hear cases between brothers, husband and wife, and even between the Israelites and the foreigners living with them. They were commanded not to show partiality in judgement (for GOD is not partial), but hear both great and small cases. And if cases were too hand, Moses said he would hear it himself.

The Israelites went to the land that GOD was to give them, but they balked, and in so doing rebelled against the LORD, for fear that the Amorites would kill them. They saw how these lands were filled with tall and strong people, and how they were fortified, and they were frightened. But Moses reminded them that GOD stood with them against the great nation of Egypt, and how they were protected and nourished in the wilderness. But GOD heard their frightened talk and told them that they would not go in there,[231] but instead Joshua would go alone. And Israel would inherit this and their children would see the land, but as for them, they would not see it. GOD sent them instead into

---

[228] As they are, they are being conquered by an Egyptian idol.

[229] Pfffft, "out came this calf." As though it just happened, and he didn't make some kind of mold to shape it into a calf.

[230] In the original text, there's this discussion about the book of life, but it's all about those who have already died not being forgiven, not about the living. I believe JESUS said that GOD is not GOD of the dead so much as GOD of the living, so this section feels not relevant.

[231] GOD is in effect, an *animus populi*. *Animus loci* is a soul of a place, which is how much of the other gods were regarded, with specific lands being important. But GOD is more about a reflection of the people who he has chosen. If the people are gutless cowards, their ambitions in conquest tend to fail.

the wilderness. But then the people changed their mind and said they would fight, but this time GOD would not give them victory, and so they were creamed. And the remainder stayed in the wilderness of Kadesh.

Moses told the people that GOD instructed them to turn north towards the lands of the people of Esau known as Edom, but they weren't to fight with them. Instead, they were instructed to purchase food and water with their money. But along the way to purchase these things, they suffered hunger and thirst. And they griped bitterly against GOD, and he sent them poisonous snakes to bite them and they died. So the people of Israel repented, and asked Moses for help from the LORD. And Aaron went into his tent to see him forging a bronze serpent, and he asked him, "What are you doing? Didn't you condemn me for making these people a golden calf?" But Moses explained that the LORD had told him, "Make a bronze serpent and mount it on a pole. When anyone who is bitten looks at it, he will live." So he mounted it on a pole, and if anyone who was bitten looked at the bronze snake, he would live.

Next, they went to the land of Moab, but they were likewise not to fight with them, as Moab was given to the people of Lot, and besides which they looked tall and strong. So they also went away from the people of Moab, and many other people. And thus they wandered for thirty-eight more years, until all those in rebellion of GOD had died.

It was then that GOD commanded them to return to fight the Amorites. Even so, they were to first negotiate peace with the Amorites, but the king hardened his heart against them. And they struck the land of the Amorites down to the last man and woman, taking the cattle as spoils.

The people of Israel were led by GOD to make war on the people of Bashan, for he had said that just as their victory against the Amorites, so also would be their triumph against these people. For GOD was with them, as he approved of their undertakings.[232] As with before, they destroyed all the cities (totaling sixty in all) but took the livestock as spoils.

And GOD gave them these lands that they had conquered, but their wives, children, and livestock were to live in them, until GOD would give the rest to them. And GOD told Joshua that just as he had done with these lands, he would do to all kingdoms they go through, for GOD would fight for them.[233] Moses flattered GOD and asked if he could see the land near Jordan and Lebanon. But GOD became angry at this suggestion and told him to speak no more of it. Instead, they were to go to Pisgah and look around and see that they would not go to Jordan. But Joshua was to scout the area, and they would later inherit it.

CHAPTER 4

And Moses reminded the people of their past sin, how they had turned away from the LORD to worship a golden calf. Those who were unfaithful to GOD, after all, did not live to make it this far. The laws therefore were not made to please GOD, but so they may live, and possess the lands prepared for them. And they were promised a land flowing in milk and honey, as well as a long life, that they may keep these commands and teach their children also.

And GOD said to the people of Israel, "Listen Israel, the LORD is our GOD, the LORD is One. And you will love the LORD your GOD with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength. These words, which I command you this day, will be on your heart; and you will teach them diligently to your children, and will talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise up. You will bind them for a sign on your hand, and they will be for symbols between your eyes. You will write them on the door posts of your house, and on your gates."

GOD explained that when asked the purpose of the law, they will tell how they used to be in bondage to Egypt, and he brought them out of there.[234] He says that it is important not to put the LORD to the

---

[232] *Annuit Coeptis*, on the United States dollar bill basically says "He approves of our undertakings." Just as the United States came together as a union as a result of GOD's approval, when GOD approves of things, we can do anything.

[233] Today (as of this writing), Trump won the election. Truth be told, GOD does not care about elections any more than he cares about kosher law. He cares about *us*. And like JESUS says about the lilies of the field, GOD will provide for our needs. This includes victory in battle.

[234] This part is important. Humans make laws to oppress other humans. But if GOD's laws are true, they are there to set people free. Some of the laws in Deuteronomy are truly senseless though, so I imagine Moses had a hand in many of them. When GOD gives no answer, people who lead others decide themselves. Because laws are written down by humans, they bring with them

test, but to keep his commands.

CHAPTER 5

GOD tells the people this law. They are not to mix with their seven nations of their enemies (the Hethite, the Girgashite, the Amorite, the Canaanite, the Perizzite, the Hivite, and the Jebusite) in marriage, for the LORD intends to cast out all those people. Nor are they to make any covenant with them. As for their altars, they are to be cut down and burned. The law is that they are to be a chosen people set aside for GOD. As a person loves him and keep his covenants, he will love them. And this is the sign of his blessing: that both their body and the ground will be fruitful. The land will be fertile, as will the livestock and your children if they keep his commands. The reverse is also true for those who hate GOD.

GOD tells them that the lands they come into are filled with good things, but warns them about thinking that they earned this through their own power, as GOD can easily take away what they have if they do not act in righteousness. GOD tells them they are now to go into Jordan to conquer nations mightier than themselves, but it's important to remember GOD does this.

In turn, Moses reminds them of why these laws are necessary, pointing back to their unfaithfulness with regard to instead worshiping a golden calf. GOD broke the first of these idols with the original stone tablets given to Moses, and their current law is made from a new set. Even so, they complained bitterly against GOD, saying that he brought them out to the wilderness to kill them. The new set were placed into an ark of wood for the journey they prepared for. Thus the requirement of the LORD is to fear him, walk in his ways, to love him, and to serve him with all of the heart and soul.

He tells them therefore to care for orphans and widows. Despite earlier talking about how the Hebrews are not to mix with those seven tribes, they are told that they should love the foreigner and give him food and clothing, just as they were foreigners in Egypt. For their ancestors came to Egypt as seventy people and left as a great multitude.

CHAPTER 6

GOD tells Israel that the law they will be given is both a blessing and a curse.

First, again they are to destroy all the nations that served gods hostile to GOD, breaking down all their altars and destroying their name. They are then to put up the name of GOD in their place, making burnt offerings and sacrifices, tithing, offering vows, freewill offerings, and offering the firstborn of their flock. They are rejoice before GOD with their sons, daughters, male and female servants, and with the Levite inside their gates.[235] But they are not to sacrifice burnt offerings just anywhere, but where GOD will choose in one of their tribes, though within their gates they can kill and eat meat as they please. However, the meat that they eat (whether for sacrifice or not) should be thoroughly drained of its blood according to the Hebrew law.[236] And thus, it should be poured out on the soil. They may not eat within their gates from their grain tithe, their new wine, their oil set aside, or the firstborn of their herd, nor any of their freewill offerings, but they will eat those before the LORD in the place chosen. GOD instructs them not to follow the example of other nations and how they serve their gods. The Hebrews are to serve GOD as he instructs.

Speaking of which, if someone claims to be a prophet gives miracles but tells them to go after other gods, they are not to do so, but they are to love GOD with their whole heart and soul. This false prophet in turn should be put to death.[237] Those false prophets are in rebellion to GOD, who brought them out of bondage, and who also brings us into freedom. He ought to be killed by throwing stones at him until death. And if a city turns away from GOD, they are to put it to the sword, and burn the entire place (taking no plunder from it) so that the fire will be like a burnt offering. And it will remain a ruin forever.

---

biases and fallibility, even if they are GOD's laws.

[235] Levites are a priestly caste of Jews who follow the code of Leviticus. I decided not to add Leviticus because I found it insufferably boring (I did however merge kosher law and the law of Jubilee into here), and not relevant to most Jews or Gentiles. In any case, those who follow these laws are an important position in Judaism.

[236] It later explains why not to, though. Blood is life, and they should not eat life with dead flesh. Such mixing is abhorrent to kosher, as we will see.

[237] This is the bottom line of why they rejected JESUS. They figured him for a blasphemer. This is what they meant that their law says he must die.

CHAPTER 7: KOSHER LAW

And Moses commanded them, saying that they were a people chosen by GOD above all of the people of the Earth, and that they were not to eat any abominable thing.[238] And he proceeded to tell them of the many things they should not eat. They were allowed to eat cattle, lamb, goat, deer of all sorts, basically any animal that have a cloven hoof *and* chews cud. But Moses explains that this is an *and* not an or, that animals like rabbit, camel, and pig only do one of these and not the other. Marsupials and rodents in general are in this category of unclean things.[239]

They are not to eat any animal that has eaten dirt, for all of us return to dust, for it is though they have eaten their ancestors. They may not eat dogs, as they are scavengers and associated with filth. Cats are much cleaner than dogs, yet they are considered intelligent and eat meat like humans. They likewise are not to eat a fox, not only because it is unclean, but because it symbolizes a human in its knowledge of good and evil, and they are not to benefit from a human corpse, nor partake in human sacrifice or cannibalism.[240] They are not to eat scavengers or predators from the birds of the air and beasts of the field, for animals that benefit from an animal corpse.[241] Nor are they anything that physically looks human, such as a monkey.

As for birds, herbivorous birds such as chickens, ducks, turkeys, geese can be eaten, but again not predators or scavengers. They also aren't to eat things with wings that are not birds, such as bats, nor any other flying mammals.

The fish of the sea may be eaten if they eat other fish, but not if they eat a fish that ate another fish.[242] Any fish that has fins and scales they can eat, but anything that doesn't have both, they can't. This includes the whole of shellfish, as well as things like whales, sharks, eels, and catfish. This list also includes jellyfish and sea cucumbers.[243]

And it is prohibited to eat filth, anything disgusting that comes out of the body, such as blood, vomit, or feces or the like, for anything that comes out of the body is unclean.[244] They aren't to eat anything that died of natural causes, but they may give it to foreigners to eat. They are not to eat a goat that has been boiled in its mother's milk.[245] This applies to any dairy. If an egg is fertile, it is considered meat, but while inside a chicken, it is seen as dairy.

What about lizards and insects? Well, the law is that swarming things that crawl along the ground are not to be eaten, which includes insects and lizards.[246] Likewise, any flying insect that crawl about are

---

[238] The kosher law is commonly considered to be a law to govern the Jews, as in "You should not eat this (or that)." But listen to the context. The purpose of this is that there is a standard for good food, not to eat anything abominable. The current godless culture of wokeness wants everyone to eat processed food with trans fat from vegetables, fake sugars, veganism, and in some cases, for no better reason that to show humans they are worthless, to give them a diet of bugs. This is GOD and Moses telling them "Have some self-respect when you eat." This is not a law, then, but a personal preference on the part of Moses. However, some of the things they avoid do in fact cause sickness. So it's a weird mix of Moses's personal ideas of what makes good food, actual health guidelines, and other things. The problem is that as JESUS says, there isn't really any unclean food, because everything was created by GOD. So he makes an objection only to want comes out of the body. Everything that goes into the body is made by GOD for your benefit. Let none degrade you with food, but if you want to eat bacon, it's your prerogative.

[239] There is some health benefit to kosher, such as avoiding worms from pigs, and rabbits eat their own poop on occasion.

[240] This is a sort of "man's best friend" addition. But foxes and cats are cooler than dogs. This addition was mainly to elaborate that cannibalism is taboo.

[241] This is to avoid apex predators. Predators have a number of problems with their meat: it is too tough to chew due to tight protein bonds, land and air animals unlike sea animals spend a significant portion of their energy keeping warm and waste all but 10% of their energy (so eating predators is about 1% of the value of eating plants), and they inherit massive toxins and parasites from eating animals. Mad cow? Vitamin A poisoning? From eating animals that were too far up the food chain. These are literally poisonous meats.

[242] Fish are less toxic and waste less energy (avoiding the two main problems of predators), but apex sea predators (sharks and killer whales) are pushing it.

[243] Avoiding these foods avoids allergies and eating sand. Also, scales tend to protect from bacteria and viruses that live in the sea.

[244] While JESUS declared all foods clean, these are things that are out of the body. Though what he thought as unclean were spiritual things out of the body; i.e. bad intentions.

[245] Jews widely use this to extend to all mammals, which makes sense. Once again, mixing life with death is taboo. Then they extend it to things that don't make sense, like eating chicken with with cheese. In the general sense of life with death, this works, but chickens can't be milked. Meanwhile, eggs with chicken is okay.

[246] This also includes mammals that crawl close to the ground like weasels and mice, as well as insects and lizards. The leg number doesn't seem to matter, so arachnids and scorpions also count. A repeating idea is that animals should neither eat dirt, nor come in too close of contact with it.

forbidden (such as bees and flies), but insects that have jointed legs to leap may be eaten, even if they have wings (this includes locusts and grasshoppers). While you may not eat bees, you may eat honey, for it is not of the bee, but transformed from a flower.
As for fruits and vegetables, these are all considered clean, but the plant must not have any insects crawling on them (or trapped within them).[247] And great care must be used to scrub off any they see. Also, if a plant is prepared with dairy, it is considered dairy. They may eat mushrooms, but as mentioned, they may not benefit from a human corpse. Nor may they pick fruit from a burial ground (or sell the grass or wood therein). Bread, cheese, and fermented foods they may eat, but nothing that has given itself over completely to leaven and is in a state of rot.
Foods should be scrubbed from a plate when eating is done, and they ought to practice the washing of pots and pans, utensils, and plates. Nor should they use unclean vessels to eat. And one ought not to eat with unclean hands.

CHAPTER 8

He then instructs them to tithe their seeds that are left over each year, setting aside one-tenth to GOD. And in this way, again, sacrifices should be made in the chosen place. Moses explains that if the place to sacrifice is too far away and thus too heavy to haul, turn it into money, and buy what they desire to be eaten or drunk in the place chosen to GOD. Likewise, the Levites should be helped out, since they have no inheritance. After every three years, they should bring a tithe to the Levite, the orphan, the widow, and the foreigner so that they too may be fed.
Likewise, at the end of every seven years, there should be a Sabbath year, basically, a release to any credit owed another person. This only counts to Hebrews, not to foreigners. He instructs them not to borrow from other nations though, because debt allows others to rule over them. They can therefore loan to foreigners, but should not be in their debt. And if they see the poor within their gates, they should open their hands and their hearts in offering of loan. Every seven years, the crop years are to cease, so as left the soil replenish itself. Moses warns them however not to use the seventh year as a justification to give the poor nothing. Moses says that even a loan that doesn't seem to pay back because of the seven years will be paid by GOD, who will bless all they do. Likewise, if they have a Hebrew man or woman sold into their indenture, after seven years they go free with an offering of something to live on. Because they should remember that they were slaves in Egypt, and that GOD redeemed them. And if the indentured person says they will not leave because of their love, they will be a servant forever.[248]
Moses also mentions that after seven weeks of years (forty-nine years), the next year will be a year of Jubilee. While the seven years are a canceling of debt, Jubilee is even more extreme. Any land that is leased or mortgaged will be bought back by its original owners, based on the number of crop years remaining. And every slave or indentured will be freed.[249]

CHAPTER 9

Moses says that all the firstborn males of the herd are sacrifices to GOD.[250] And he says that such a male will do no work nor be sheared. It will be eaten at the appointed place with their household. And it shouldn't have any blemish, neither be lame or blind, nor have any defect, or it should not be sacrificed to GOD.[251]
Moses also reminds them to keep the Passover, the festival of unleavened bread. In this way, all males will appear before GOD three times a year in the chosen place: once in the feast of unleavened bread

---

[247] Figs should technically be off limits, as it becomes ripe when a wasp gets caught on a leaf, and the body becomes digested to make the fruit.
[248] They mentioned thrusting an awl to their ear in the door, but that's barbaric. It's just a gesture for what you can just tell them, that they are pinned to this place.
[249] The really interesting part about this is that it seems that it's GOD's way of adjusting the calendar. After every three years is a leap year, and the others are similar adjustments.
[250] This is a callback to when the pharaoh of Egypt tried to have the firstborn of Israel slaughtered. And it is also a call-forward to what GOD intends to do with JESUS. JESUS is a firstborn male child given as a blood offering to GOD. Even though, strictly speaking, JESUS should be genetically a female (as he had no human father), GOD has made her a male offering on our behalf.
[251] This is also foreshadowing. The Roman officials and Herod claimed they couldn't find anything wrong with JESUS, no reason why he should be killed.

(Passover), again in the feast of weeks (Shavuot)[252], and the feast of tents (Sukkot). And they will celebrate them in this way. For Passover, that no yeast should be found within the threshold for seven days, neither will any of the meat sacrificed the first day of the evening remain in the morning. Six days will be set aside to eat unleavened bread, and the seventh day will be a Sabbath and solemn event in remembrance of the time in bondage in Egypt. For the Feast of Weeks, they will spend the time in study of Torah even into the night, and it is tradition to decorate homes with greenery and to eat dairy. For the Feast of Tents, they will build a tent to honor their time in the wilderness where they were exposed to the elements, and to honor the four species: the fruit of the lemon (*etrog*), the frond of a date palm tree (*lulav*), the branch of the myrtle tree (*hadass*), and the branch of the willow (*aravah*). And these will symbolize that four types of visitors (*ushpizn*) may come during this time: *etrog* follow the law of Moses and do good deeds, *lulav* do not know the law but do good deeds, *hadass* who know the law but do not do good deeds, and *aravah* who neither know the law nor do good deeds.

Moses also instructs the people to make officers and judges among their people, and to exact righteous justice. They are not to take justice into their own hands, nor take bribes, nor to pervert the words of righteous people. This is so they can live in the land that GOD gives them. He instructs them not to build any pillar, nor plant any kind of tree near the altar of GOD.[253] Nor are they to sacrifice a cow or lamb that has a blemish, or any unclean or evil animal. Likewise, there should not be any people among their group that has done evil in GOD's sight or worshiped any other gods, nor the sun, moon, or any of the stars.[254] And any that have done wrong in GOD's sight will be stoned to death, with the testimony of two or more witnesses. If the matter is too hard for those witnesses, they are to go up to the chosen place and go before Levites and the judge, and they will show GOD's judgement on the matter.

CHAPTER 10

Moses next talks about when coming to the promised land, and choosing a king for themselves, and by what standard they are to choose. They are not to choose a foreigner to rule over them, because GOD does not desire for them to return to Egypt and into slavery. Nor are they to choose anyone who wishes more horses, wives, silver, or gold for himself. Instead, the king they ought to have takes the law of Moses seriously.

With the king, so also the Levites. They are not to take an inheritance from any of the people of Israel, because the LORD is their inheritance. Thus they eat from offerings, of a portion of the meat, and from the first fruits of grain, new wine, and so on. This is because GOD has chosen them. And as such, they ought to act like it. The Levites are not to be found doing anything sketchy, nor are the people of the land of Israel to follow the example of the foreigners. They are not to make their children walk through fire,[255] nor be any kind of diviner, fortuneteller, worker of sorcery, nor one who consults with mediums, nor have a familiar spirit, nor call forth the dead. These things are an abomination to GOD, and such should not be among the people of GOD.[256] Rather, they should be blameless in the presence of GOD and in his temples. Moses talks about how GOD can claim no connection with any of those

---

[252] Later called Pentecost. Sukkot and Passover are still celebrated as Thanksgiving and Easter, to this day.

[253] Apparently there was a specific idol called *asherah*, basically a tree or pole that was a sign of GOD having a consort (as was commonly believed by the Hethite/Hittite writings). The Bible speaks repeatedly of cutting down such trees. The word also sounds similar to Ishtar, the goddess married to Baal.

[254] Here they say "hosts of Heaven" indicating that the stars actually are angels, and planets are wayward angels that are not on path.

[255] This covers both ordeals like walking on hot coals or the like, but there was also a sort of abortion furnace shaped like a giant calf to Baal.

[256] Laws like these and others are the cause of being cast into a lake of fire in Revelation. But JESUS is the New Testament, and his worship is to be acceptance of a new law of grace. The other day, I lusted after a woman in our church. Then I saw her son pawing at her inappropriately, and indeed it distracted me from the service. But I thought of how if I were to tell the kid that this was inappropriate, wouldn't I be condemning my own sin? JESUS died for our grace. In any case, the likely reason for these being mentioned was that they are in fact attempts to curb practices of foreign cultures. Some of them are forbidden because they are barbaric like child sacrifice. Others call upon foreign deities, or use power to earn money (note the distinction between prophecy and fortunetelling), uses other people for money, gets you possessed by a familiar, messes with death, or uses magic to cause harm. Prayer and healing is definitely okay, and faith in GOD to make miracles is fine (see Moses), but using supernatural power for sadistic purpose is surely taboo.

people, but the people of Israel he cannot do this, because he has set them aside as chosen people. And Moses prophesies that GOD will raise up a prophet for them, and that they should listen to him. Moses says this is to fulfill what they wanted while in Sinai, saying, "Let me not hear again the voice of the LORD my GOD, neither let me see this great fire any more, that I not die." For GOD said in response, "They have well said that which they have spoken. I will raise them up a prophet from among their brothers, like you; and I will put my words in his mouth, and he will speak to them all that I will command him. It will happen, that whoever will not listen to my words which he will speak in my name, I will call him to account. But the prophet, who will speak a word presumptuously in my name, which I have not commanded him to speak, or who will speak in the name of other gods, that same prophet will die." When they ask how they will know whether or not a prophet comes in the name of GOD, then GOD tells them that prophets who are false say things that do not come to pass.

CHAPTER 11

Moses promised that GOD will cut off those nations, and that these people will inherit their land and take their houses.[257] He says this, shortly before talking about sanctuary cities for accused murderers. Basically, if one is accused of killing his neighbor, he can go to one of three cities, which GOD has set apart for forgiveness of such actions. Innocent blood will not be shed in these cities for they are sacred to GOD. Of course, if he is found to be in fact guilty, he will be delivered to any would-be avengers. Again, Moses says that justice requires two people testifying, in case one is false. And then he states the Code of Hammurabi: life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot.

Moses talks about a battle, and how the LORD will go to fight for the people, but offers a scenario where beforehand the officers ask if anyone has a new house and has not dedicated it, a vineyard and not used his fruit, or a wife that he has just married. They say for the men who have such things to go home, for they may die and someone else may benefit from such things. Likewise, the fearful are to go home. After that, the troops themselves are to see if they can make peace with the lands, fighting them only if they make war instead. If a country only makes war because they desire something, you are to kill the leaders first, so the warriors lose heart; for I will strike the shepherd and the sheep will scatter.[258] If they do not lose heart, all the male soldiers they are to kill, but the women, children, and livestock can be left alive. But this is not so for the seven nations or nations that have declared GOD as their enemy, they are to make total war against them. Moses says that regardless of who they attack though, they are not to use trees suitable for growing food in their siege devices.

Moses then gave a law concerning a person killed in a field when it is not clear who killed him. The elders and judges are to go and measure the distance between nearby towns, and the nearest one is supposed to break the neck of a heifer as an atonement offering to forgive this death.

He also said that if they are in battle, and afterwards take as spoils a beautiful woman, they may bring her to their home and she gets her head shaved and her nails trimmed, then she removes her clothing from when she was captured, and mourns her parents for a month. After this, he may take her as a wife. But if either party is not pleased, she must be let go to where she wants. She cannot be treated as a slave nor property to be sold. She is to be treated with dignity and not dishonor.[259]

And if a man is a bigamist, and he loves one wife and hates the other, but the unloved one gives him his firstborn son, he is not to give the son of the loved before the unloved, who is firstborn. The firstborn gets the double portion.[260] And if a man has a son who is stubborn and rebellious despite

---

[257] No offense, but that sounds like the sort of thing that psychopaths tell themselves. "Oh yeah, GOD promised me this land and these houses." I'm watching a film called *Don't Move* and when the female lead asks the psycho killer, "Is that when you lost your mind?" he tells her that he didn't lose his mind, he found his clarity. Yeah, no, that's bullshit. Just as here. GOD does not actually justify the evil we do on this Earth. Theft and murder continues to be so. But while we are evil, GOD is truly good, and will forgive even our wickedness. But we shouldn't claim he tells us to do stuff that he doesn't.

[258] This sentence is added. The purpose of normal war is to demoralize with as little suffering as possible. But not war with the determined, and definitely not with those who war with GOD. I also added a section from Zechariah, basically to tell about how human beings tend to be dependent on leaders.

[259] This passage is sometimes falsely used to contrast with Islam. But the latter allows straight-up rape and slave trading. This is a marriage, and the woman is allowed to go.

[260] This is problematic for several reasons. First, we no longer allow bigamy in any civilized country. So it's an irrelevant law. Second, while it is true that he should not favor the loved son over the unloved, a double portion is the opposite of fair, depending on whether the double portion means the full portion (e.g. both portions of the inheritance) or simply twice as much.

being punished, he says they should take him to the elders of the city, and they will stone him to death to get rid of the evil in their midst.[261]
Then Moses talked about how if someone is put to death, and hung on a tree, their body should not remain all night, but be buried the same day, for everyone who hangs on a tree is cursed by GOD, and they don't want to defile the land that they inherit with a curse.[262]

CHAPTER 12

And Moses continued to pass down laws. Some of these were interpretations of laws that GOD had given, while others were seemingly just arbitrary laws given because of their hardness of heart. [263]
Because they would not keep the Ten Commandments, more were given.
He said that they are not to watch their brother's animals go astray and hide from them, but bring them to their brother. And if they are a long distance away, they are to hold the animals until their brother seeks after them. They should do the same whether it's clothing or animals or something else, return them if they can, hold on to them otherwise. And if they see a fallen animal in a ravine, they should try to help it up.
Moses commanded that a woman will not wear men's clothing, neither will a man put on women's clothing. For just as Moses was forced to wear such clothing by his adopted mother, so also children can be taught deceit and falsehood.[264]
Moses then said that if they encounter a bird's nest, and the hen is sitting on eggs, they can't take the hen, but they can take the eggs. The idea is to not make orphan chickens. And if they build a house, they need to make it so someone can't fall off it easily, and thus bring blood on their house.[265]
Moses continues with laws against mixing things. They can't have a vineyard with two types of grape, since they might create unwanted hybrids and ruin the wine. They can't plow with a donkey and ox together. They can't wear clothing with mixed fabric.
He commanded them to make fringes on the borders of their clothing.[266]
Not all of Moses's laws are stupid or nonsense though. He also gives a law concerning a man who accuses his woman of being unfaithful (specifically, not being a virgin when he married her). If the woman is found to in fact be faithful, the man is to be fined one hundred shekels for insulting her good name. But then they ruin it by talking about stoning her to death.[267] And if a woman and man are found lying in adultery, both will get stoned to death. Then they really ruin it by talking about how if a man comes and sleeps with a woman who is married, and she does not cry out, she will be stoned too. As though she would cry out, when the law is stacked against her. They do at least not punish her if it is clear that he did try to force himself on her.
But then they also say that if she has not married to anyone, and a man rapes her and takes her virginity, he is must offer fifty shekels as a dowry, and she can make him to be his wife. And he is not allowed to dismiss her from marriage without her consent, for all of her life, for he is to support her.[268]

---

[261] If the previous passage seemed unjust, this is an outright red flag. What is to stop people from routinely saying their children are willful? It would be one thing if we're talking about a psycho kid, but we're just talking about a kid who doesn't honor his parents.
[262] This is the rationale for later explaining that JESUS took the curse of the law by hanging on a cross.
[263] The Jews think that all of the law is given by GOD, but clearly this is not so. There are a great number of laws that have no justification at all. The purpose of the law is to act as a sort of mirror to show you how you have failed in the eyes of GOD and man. As such, it is impossible to keep the law perfectly. You are a sinner.
[264] If it were really about male or female clothing, plenty of women wear slacks and jeans, and it stands to reason that makeup, skirts, and dresses are not a taboo for men. But the transgender notion of claiming that makes people the opposite sex is a type of deceit. There's also the matter of preying on children and filling them with this garbage, or telling them that GOD made a mistake. GOD doesn't make mistakes. Some boys are sensitive and feminine, some girls are tomboys, but we don't need surgical "fixing" because we are all beautifully made. GOD loves us unconditionally, but he wants us healthy and happy. If you are happy wearing a dress or jeans, go for it, but don't chop your body up!
[265] Similar laws exist to this day. If there are small children nearby and you have a pool, you have to close the gates to prevent the liability of a drowning.
[266] This is an example of the law being impossible. These fringes had a space to hang tassels, which were made of braided together fabric, after they just mentioned how you can't blend fabric. In essence, you are commanded to follow one law that breaks another law!
[267] The marker of virginity (the hymen) can occasionally break or tear for reasons other than sex. This means some women could be put to death for no good reason.
[268] This is a very rudimentary method of child support, essentially meaning that the rapist has to pay for what he has done by

Moses then talked about not taking his father's wife, or uncovering his father's clothes, which could be a euphemism for taking your own father to bed.

CHAPTER 13

Then Moses made laws about who is and isn't welcome in the assembly of the LORD. He said that anyone who has their testicles crushed or male organs cut off is not welcome. .And no illegitimate children are welcome either. Nor anyone born as an Ammonite or Moabite, even to the tenth generation, for their people refused to give bread and water while they wandered and hired Balaam to stand against them.[269] On the other hand, the Edomites are welcome, as they are brother to Jacob.[270] As are the Egyptians, because they lived as a foreigner in their land.[271]

Moses next talks about camping against enemies, and keeping from doing anything evil. If you do something unclean at night (implied here to be masturbation), then you have to stand outside the camp and not come in until you bathe in the evening. And you are supposed to take a shovel and dig to cover what comes out of your body, because the Hebrews are ashamed of their own fecal matter/sperm. They think that GOD somehow sees such things as unholy. Seriously. Although fecal matter makes sense.

CHAPTER 14

Moses talked about slavery. While modern people condemn the Bible as "supporting slavery", the secular countries all around them were in support of slavery, and would destroy them if they tried to abolish it. As they try to do today with Western countries who have abolished slavery, marking them for mass invasion through illegal immigration. These are the same critics of Biblical slavery, they are perfectly okay with illegal immigrants being subjects of human slave trafficking, and they are okay with countries who abolished slavery being overthrown. Yes, these are the very descendants of these wicked countries. The people of Israel, however, made laws to slowly weaken slavery. If a slave escapes, they are not to deliver him back to his master, but he will live with the people of Israel and they are not to oppress him. Neither should there be any prostitutes from the children of Israel. For prostitution is sex slavery. Nor should anyone be hired as a slave, or paid dirt wages for any vow, as GOD hates these strongly.

Moses also talked about lending on interest. This seems like a non sequitur, but debt is slavery. You shouldn't lend interest on any Israelite, but as mentioned before, you may lend on interest to foreigners. Likewise, whatever vows you make, you should keep, whether a debt or a promise, so it is better if you do not vow. Everything you say, GOD holds you accountable for, so again, it is better not to make grand promises.

Moses then talked about gleaning and says that you can pick whatever you wish, but you are not to take a basket or chop the stalks with your sickle.

CHAPTER 15

Moses then told of the law of divorce. Moses said that if a man has found something that he doesn't like, that he could write a certificate, and they would be divorced.[272] Moses's law also only stated that a man can write this certificate, meaning that a woman could potentially be bounced from house to house, with husband after husband rejecting her. If the latter husband rejects her or if he dies, she is considered defiled, and can't go to the first man. This is essentially why there are suffering widows, because the law prevents them from remarrying someone still alive. The law goes on to say that a man who is married gets a year off from military duties to stay with his wife.

Moses next mentioned a series of laws: not taking a millstone or upper millstone to pledge (whatever

---

living with the woman that he hurt.

[269] The fact that it's possible to have such things through no fault of your own suggests membership has nothing to do with sin or rightness with GOD and more to do with Moses's idea of an all-normal club. This is precisely why Jews eventually defected to JESUS, because he understood that these rules made them pariahs.

[270] Even though a later passage has them in war against the Edomites, and most Jews don't seem to consider them Jewish.

[271] While this standard is harsher to Ammonites and Moabites, it is actually softer to the Egyptians, curiously ignoring their slavery and poor treatment in Egypt.

[272] This is the same law that JESUS spoke about when people asked him about whether it is right that a man should divorce his wife. JESUS basically takes the idea that GOD has joined these people to its logical conclusion. After that, his disciples are like "None of us want to get married if it's like that." Yeah, they weren't exactly ideal gentlemen at the time. Proper treatment of women came about as a result of Christianity.

that means), turning a thief into a slave, dealing with lepers according to the laws of the Levites,[273] and standing outside a house rather then going inside when they collect a loan. The latter one discussed how if he's a poor man, they aren't to keep this debt overnight, but give the money back to them, as it is the righteous thing to do before GOD, and they will be blessed for it by the poor man. Carrying on with that theme, Moses said that if a worker is poor, it is not right to work them too hard or mistreat them, regardless of whether they are a Hebrew or foreigner, as they have few options, and may cry against the person to GOD.

Moses explained that parents are not responsible for the sins of the children, nor ought the children be put to death for the sins of the parents, but everyone is accountable for their own sin.

He then discussed laws about justice for widows and foreigners. For example, if you harvest a field, and forgot to harvest some of it, you're not to go and get it, but leave it behind for foreigners. The same for olive trees, or for vineyards.

CHAPTER 16

Moses mentioned that if there is a criminal issue (or a tort) between two people, and the judges intervene, the one who is wrong might be beaten with a whip, according to how serious their issue is. But he says that they shouldn't be beaten more than forty times, as such a thing humiliates the person beaten.

Moses also said not to muzzle an ox while he treads out the grain.[274]

Moses set a law that if a man's brother is married and he dies without giving her a child, the wife of the dead man will go to her, so that the brother will perform this duty and the family name will remain. If he refuses, the wife goes to the elders and says that he refused, and the wife takes off his shows and spits in his face.

Moses talks about not using unjust measurements in weighing, and not having such weights in your bag or in their house. Just as GOD uses perfect and just weights, they also ought to measure correctly. He says this in remembrance of Amalek and how their people dealt unjustly with the Hebrews, that the name of the Amalekites be blotted out.[275]

CHAPTER 17

Moses repeated the command to tithe the first fruits, telling a prayer to say to GOD, "A wandering Aramean was my father, and he went down into Egypt, and lived there, few in number, and there he became a nation, great, mighty, and numerous. The Egyptians mistreated us, and afflicted us, and laid on us hard bondage. And we cried to the LORD, the GOD of our fathers, and the LORD heard our voice, and saw our affliction, and our toil, and our oppression. And the LORD brought us forth out of Egypt with a mighty hand, and with an outstretched arm, and with great terror, and with signs, and with wonders, and he has brought us into this place, and has given us this land, a land flowing with milk and honey. Now, I have brought the first of the fruit of the ground, which you, LORD, have given me."

Likewise, they were to make an altar of stones and plaster for burnt offerings. They were to write this law on the stones themselves. And these are the laws intended for Mount Gerizim, "These will stand on Mount Gerizim to bless the people, when you have passed over the Jordan: Simeon, and Levi, and Judah, and Issachar, and Joseph, and Benjamin. These will stand on Mount Ebal for the curse: Reuben, Gad, and Asher, and Zebulun, and Naphtali. The Levites will answer, and tell all the men of Israel with a loud voice: 'Cursed is the man who makes an engraved or molten image, an abomination to the LORD, the work of the hands of the craftsman, and sets it up in secret. Cursed is who sets light by his father or his mother. Cursed is who removes his neighbor's landmark. Cursed is who makes the

---

[273] There was a whole medical standard that would put COVID to shame. You were supposed to stay a certain number of feet from them, they were to tell you that they were unclean, usually not letting them worship in the temple, and they were probably not to do business with you or hand you anything. The thing is, their walled cities were the major cause of leprosy, and all of this made it difficult for them to live decent lives.

[274] The idea is that the ox is muzzled to keep it from eating grain. A worker needs some sort of wage for their work, whether food or currency. In modern times, not only have unpaid internships been a real problem (where people are told they "may" have paid work in exchange for effort) but during the whole COVID thing, employees were highlighted as muzzled oxen, by forcing them to wear a mask in exchange for their work. Essentially, they were told "Shut up, slave! Keep working!"

[275] For a people that the Jews want to blot out, they spend an awful large portion of their time remembering them. Esther and Kings for instance.

blind to wander out of the way. Cursed is who wrests the justice due the foreigner, fatherless, and widow. Cursed is who lies with his father's wife, because he has uncovered his father's skirt. Cursed is who lies with any kind of animal. Cursed is who lies with his sister, the daughter of his father, or the daughter of his mother. Cursed is who lies with his mother-in-law. Cursed is who strikes his neighbor in secret. Cursed is who takes a bribe to kill an innocent person. And cursed is who doesn't confirm all the words of this law to do them.'" And all the people are to say "Amen."
Moses told of GOD's plan for them based on whether or not they obey the law. If they obeyed, their field, their bodies, their cities, and their women would all be blessed. They would not be able to be conquered by any enemies, and the land would be fertile, giving them plenty to eat. But if they disobey, their bodies would struggle with fertility and be overcome with sickness, their land would be barren, their cities corrupt, and they would struggle to eat. And their enemies would put them on ships as slaves.
And Moses told them about GOD's covenant, how they were led out of Egypt to wander for forty years, and their clothes and shoes did not wear out, nor did they starve despite having no real bread or water (they got water from a stone, and manna from Heaven). He also talks about how GOD made an example of the people who did not follow his law, calling attention not only to Egypt with their idols, but also Sodom and Gomorrah, and other such places. And he says that if any foreigners ask what this anger of GOD means, they are to tell them that it's a result of not keeping the covenant.
Mose set the law as a blessing and a curse, claiming that ultimately it is a choice. Either you choose life or you choose death.[276]

CHAPTER 18

Moses was quite old at this point, and tended to sit and rest rather than walking. While sitting near a stream, he saw three boys tormenting a fox. "Why would you do this cruel thing?!? Is this your fox that you mistreat?" he asked the boys. They told him, "It came from the wilderness. Father told us that there are things we may not eat. He said we may eat animals that chew their cud and have cloven hooves, but not animals like rabbits. Nor can we eat lizards or creeping things like worms. But this fox here does not obey the law. It eats all sorts of abominable things. And it stole meat from our bags! This is an evil creature, and we are going to kill it until it dies." But Moses shook his head, "We people of Israel must obey the law. But I am not sure that GOD intends the law to be followed by animals. You are right to say that it is a creature of the wilderness. But I tell you, all creatures are created by GOD, and the law is created for you, not the beasts. Let it alone. It does what it must to survive."[277]
After he said this, the boys left. The fox looked at Moses for a period, then scampered away.

CHAPTER 19

Moses then explained that at one hundred and twenty, he won't be able to go with them anymore. The Israelites will conquer more of their enemies and finally see their promised land, but he will not be able to see it himself. He told them not to be afraid, for the LORD will be with them. He then called to Joshua, and effectively made him the new leader. He tells them that in the future, the Hebrews will be unfaithful, and that GOD will mete out punishment for them so that they might turn again to him. And he told them to put these words in the ark of the covenant, so they would witness against their sin. He also told them not to act in violence against their enemies, for while GOD will punish them if they do wrong in his sight, "vengeance is mine," for the LORD will avenge them against their enemies. And after Moses, there was not a prophet like him since, who had seen GOD face to face, and he worked mighty signs and wonders, that the people of Israel would know that GOD has set his law in the land.

PROPHECIES OF MESSIAH

CHAPTER 1

Now after the people of Israel had left Egypt, among them was a man who wished to betray them to the Moabites. This man's name was Balaam, and while he was a wicked prophet, he was not a false prophet. And he was offered great treasure by Balak, the king of Moab, if he would pronounce a curse

[276] However, JESUS died on the cross for our sins, choosing death in order that are sins might have been sacrificed for.
[277] In this addition, the fox represents the fact that the Gentiles are not bound by the laws of the Jews.

on Israel. But Balaam understood that to do so, he needed GOD's permission. But GOD told him, "You must not put a curse on those people, because they are blessed." So Moab's king Balak sent more officials to offer him a better deal than the first.
And Balaam mounted his donkey to go to Moab, but the LORD sent an angel with a flaming sword to block his way. Now Balaam could not see the angel, but his donkey could, and his donkey balked. Balaam urged the donkey onward, but it moved three times away from the angel. So Balaam beat the animal. Then GOD let his donkey speak, and he complained that Balaam beat him. Then Balaam's eyes were opened, then he saw the angel with its sword, and that the donkey had saved his life. And the angel told him that he was only to speak of what GOD told him concerning Israel.
So Balak took Balaam to a high place called Bamoth Baal, and he told him to curse the Israelites. And Balaam made fourteen sacrifices, but he said, "How can I curse what GOD has not cursed, or denounce what GOD has not denounced?" And Balak took him to another high place known as Pisgah, and he offered another fourteen sacrifices, but the answer was the same. Finally, Balak took him to a mountain known as Peor, and while he offered another fourteen sacrifices, but GOD had not changed his answer. Balaam said, "How beautiful are your tents and your dwelling places, Israel." So Balak told him to leave, and that he would have given him a reward, but GOD ruined that for him. Before he left, he gave the king of Moab four more prophecies:

I. A star will come out of Jacob
II. A scepter will rise out of Israel
III. He will crush the skulls of Moab[278]
IV. He will crush the heads of the children of Sheth[279]

And there were other prophecies concerning this Messiah, made over the years by several prophets, for GOD desired that people know there was a plan for them.

CHAPTER 2

Now a problem arose in what exactly the plan of GOD was, however. For there were prophecies about the Messiah that split into Jews and what would become the Christians. According to those who would remain Jews, the Messiah would be a great political leader descended from King David, he would be well-versed in Jewish law and observe its commandments, he would be a powerful warrior who would win battles for Israel, and he would be a great judge who makes righteous decisions (all of these are cited with sources from Isaiah and Jeremiah). But most importantly, he would be a human being, not a god or demigod.[280] But the Jews cursed those who tried to predict the coming of the Messiah, for faulty estimates might cause those who were Jews to lose faith, if a false leader came. Instead, various guidelines were proposed, where one or more could be right: if Israel repented for a single day, if a single Sabbath was observed correctly, if they observed two Sabbaths in a row properly, in a generation that is totally innocent or totally guilty, in a generation where people lose hope, or in one where children disrespect their parents. They say the Messiah would bring about the political and spiritual redemption of Israel, he would establish a government in Israel that would be the center for law for all the world, both for Jews and Gentiles, he would rebuild the Temple and restore worship, and he would restore the law of the Torah as the law of the land, citing sources from Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Hosea. Before the Messiah's coming, there would be war and suffering. Once the Messiah comes, there would be peace among all people, and predators would no longer eat meat but the land would be fertile and prosperous. The Jews would return to their homeland, and the law of Jubilee would be

---

[278] This prophecy is often considered unfulfilled because Moab was wiped out. But for Balaam to have been a true prophet, his entire prophecy must work here. So what do we understand from this passage? Well, it could be the location where Moab was, which is near Jordan, but that doesn't really track. So ultimately, I found the answer with the religion of Moab. Moab worships Chemosh, the god of war and the underworld. This prophecy is fulfilled. JESUS is a man who halts the warring madness of the world (the Vikings had a thousand years of peace when they embraced Christ) and importantly, who has overcome death and the underworld.
[279] This is often translated into Seth. But Seth was the righteous son of Adam. Also that makes no sense, because the sons of Seth would include every human living on Earth past the flood. But there is a similar word *sheth* meaning "tumult." Overcoming tumult is consistent with being a man who desires peace.
[280] No sources are given for this assumption. The Jews simply consider it *shituf* or heterodoxy, something not quite heresy or idolatry, but not Judaism. Aside from which, JESUS is considered fully human and fully GOD. That is to say, this is not an idol, but GOD. It's not a demigod, but all human and all GOD. Just as every fabric of ourselves comes from created atoms, every grain of each person is GOD, though we are men.

restored. And all the world would know the true name of GOD, and would worship only GOD. And there would be no more sin. Sacrifices would still be brought to the Temple, but these would be sacrifices of thanksgiving, for there would no longer be any need to atone.[281]

CHAPTER 3

Different Jewish groups have different takes on the Messiah. In Hasidic Judaism, one person a generation has the potential to become the Messiah, and he is the *Tzadik Ha-Dor* (Righteousness for the Generation). Chabad Messianism said that we ought to hasten the coming of the Messiah through acts of kindness, provoking acts of outreach. Of the various viewpoints, this is the one that I object to most, as while the idea of random acts of kindness sounds good, trying to please GOD through shallow actions will never be enough to fulfill his law. Moreover, they named Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson, the rabbi who suggested this, their Messiah.[282] In Conservative Judaism, the *Emet Ve Emunah*, their statement of principles said the following, "Since no one can say for certain what will happen in the days to come each of us is free to fashion personal speculative visions. Though some of us accept these speculations as literally true, many of us understand them as elaborate metaphors. For the world community we dream of an age when warfare would be abolished, when justice and compassion would be the axioms of interpersonal and international relationships and when, in Isaiah's words, 'the land will be filled with the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea.' For our people, we dream of the gathering of all Jews to Zion where we can again be masters of our destiny and express our distinctive genius in every area of our national life. We affirm Isaiah's prophecy that 'Torah will come forth from Zion, the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.' We do not know when the Messiah would come, nor whether he would be a charismatic human figure or is a symbol of the redemption of humankind from the evils of the world. Through the doctrine of a messianic figure, Judaism teaches us that every individual human being must live as if he or she, individually, has the responsibility to bring about the messianic age. Beyond that, we echo the words of Maimonides based on the prophet Habakkuk that though he may tarry, yet do we wait for him each day." Reform and Reconstructionist Jews do not believe in a Messiah, but rather embrace the idea of utopia. Like with Chabad, we can only build such things with GOD to help, for all attempts to do it on our own power will end in failure. Karaite Judaism has ten principles of belief, with the tenth being about the Messiah, "GOD does not despise those living in exile; on the contrary. He desires to purify them through their sufferings and they may hope for his help every day and for redemption by Him through the Messiah of the seed of David." Overall, many of these ideas I like. The only thing that I don't like is the idea of taking matters into your own hands. You ought to do good, not in expectation that you can somehow force GOD to produce the Messiah, but trusting in GOD's plan.

The Jews reject JESUS, claiming that he did not fulfill the prophecies of the Messiah. They instead accept Shimeon ben Kosiba, known as *Bar Kochba* (son of the star), who was closer to their way of thinking. He fought against the Roman Empire and retook Jerusalem. He resumed sacrifices at the site of the temple and had plans to rebuild it. He tried to make coins in his name as well. But like any normal human, his attempts were soundly crushed. This is to fulfill what JESUS said, "I have come in my Father's name, and you do not receive me. If another comes in his own name, you will receive him." All of this brings us to the Messianic prophecies themselves.

CHAPTER 4

---

[281] What are we to make of this? Well, first, I kinda like meat, even if I don't like the idea of butchering animals. One webcomic called Gaia has trees that literally grew meat, so yeah, I suppose it is possible for there to be a world where protein from plants sustains all of our needs. But there is some kind of sense of forced conversion or removal of free will that's a bit creepy. A more accurate idea is not that they will be robbed of the ability to make decisions, but that all decisions will be justified in the eyes of GOD, for all people know GOD as readily as they understand basic math. There's also the claim that this Messiah hasn't come yet, because their homeland isn't restored, their temple isn't rebuilt, and this peace and prosperity isn't there. But I look at things differently: after JESUS, the Gentiles stopped their idolatry and sacrifices of human lives and began to live like a second group of Jews, the Temple was built not of human hands but of the body of Christ, and the peace is there despite the strife that exists in the physical world. These things are paving over of the reality of JESUS. The same for no longer needing to atone, with the forgiveness of sins, the atonement sacrifices are off the table. He already came again, three days after his death. And one day, the only thing that will change is that the general public is able to see him.

[282] It is hopeless for humans to justify themselves, and rejecting JESUS (who was the Messiah) while accepting some regular old guy who lived, got old, and died like a regular person is willful in the extreme.

I will suspend judgement here, and let the reader decide whether JESUS fulfilled the prophecies or not.[283]

The Psalms tell that the Messiah would be eternal, the creator of all, and would be called LORD. Proverbs, Isaiah, Habakkuk, and Micah all speak of someone who is of GOD, yet existed before all the world was created. Daniel mentioned that seventy weeks are set for Israel to clean up its wickedness, in preparation for to anoint the Most Holy Place, but this also translates as Most Holy One, making the Messiah not only anointed, but set aside as holy. The Psalms mentioned a king, then follows it by calling this king GOD. Isaiah mentioned preparing the was for the LORD and making a highway for GOD, similar to how they cleared roads for the king. Jeremiah said that the Messiah would be known as LORD and Savior, but also be from the line of David, making him also a man. Isaiah said that unto us a son would be given, and he would be called the Wonderful Counselor, Mighty GOD, Everlasting Father, and Prince of Peace. Zechariah compares the Messiah to a shepherd. Elsewhere, it also mentioned the Messiah as a shepherd and the LORD, but that the shepherd would be struck and the sheep would be scattered. Proverbs has a passage about the one who has gone into Heaven and returned (meaning GOD), and who is his son? The Psalms go on to confirm this father and son relationship, saying, "You are my son, today I have become your father." In the second book of Samuel, they mention that the Messiah would build a house to GOD and establish GOD's kingdom forever. Another Psalm mentioned that the Messiah would call out to GOD as his Father. Next there is a prophecy in Daniel that the Messiah would be put to death seven sevens and sixty-two sevens[284] from the time in Babylon where a decree is made, and after that would come an abomination of desolation.[285] There are about three or four decrees (mostly in Ezra), but the one mentioned by Nehemiah is the most likely one. Genesis mentioned that between evil and the seed of mankind, there is enmity, and one day evil would be crushed. Since the line of line of David eventually eventually comes all the way from Adam, Genesis effectively predicts that the Messiah would be related to all humankind, from Seth to Noah's righteous son Shem, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to Ruth & Boaz, to Jesse, to David. In indeed, multiple sources including the Psalms, Isaiah, Samuel, Chronicles, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel all point to the Messiah being a descendant of King David. More interesting though, is the Messiah's descent from the builder of the second temple, Zerubbabel, as mentioned by Haggai.

As to the circumstances of his birth, Isaiah mentioned there would be a virgin who bears a son, and said his name Immanuel would mean "GOD With US". Jeremiah also mentioned that the Messiah would be born of a virgin. Micah mentioned that Bethlehem would be the place he is born. Isaiah prophesied that GOD would call the Messiah even before his birth. Isaiah prophesied also that he would be protected by GOD, and given wise words to speak. Hosea said that GOD calls his son out of Egypt. Jeremiah predicted that male children would be slaughtered, but it's sort of an offhanded comment (a far better prediction was in Exodus with the pharaoh killing the firstborn). Isaiah said that the Messiah would be from Nazareth, but this is an even weirder prediction.[286] Isaiah also said that the Messiah would grow up from a poor family, without all the regular trappings of kingship. And Isaiah predicts that the prophet who would prepare for the Messiah would live in the wilderness. Malachi also predicted that a messenger would prepare the way for the Messiah, that he would turn many to righteousness, and they he would be like the prophet Elijah. In the law of Deuteronomy, they explain that the Messiah would be a prophet, and the Psalms call him a priest in the order of Melchizedek.[287]

---

[283] As such, I didn't mention the chapter and verse, believing that anyone who wants to seek after truth will find it, and other people will close their hearts. This results in awkward paragraphs, but far less awkward than me including chapters that prophecies are made, and then when they are fulfilled.

[284] This is a call back to the Sabbath years, where the Sabbath seventh day is extended to a year. That's one forty-nine year period and sixty-two sevens, or 483 years.

[285] The abomination of desolation is that the Jews are without a temple to worship GOD.

[286] "A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse; from his roots a Branch will bear fruit." The word "branch" in Hebrew is *netzer*. Say it with me. Netzer-eth. Nazareth. Yeah, it's like a dad joke.

[287] Melchizedek was the king of Salem and priest of El Elyon. His name literally means "my king is righteousness." JESUS in turn is known as the King of Righteousness. It's also a tie-in to the line of Shem, Noah's righteous son. Lastly, Melchizedek blessed Abraham by bringing out bread and wine.

Zechariah said that he would be both a priest and a king. And everywhere from Genesis to Numbers to the Psalms, it was known that the Messiah would be a king. But the people of Israel only understood kings from the context of violent rulers who took power by force. Yet as Isaiah had said, this was a Wonderful Counselor and a Prince of Peace. Deuteronomy said that even the angels would worship him. The Psalms said that he would have authority over all things, and that he is the firstborn of GOD. As far back as Genesis, they also make an archetype of a long awaited son who is to be sacrificed, only in Abraham's case he does not go through with it, but the Messiah is intended as a lamb of sacrifice, and in fact would die on the same mountain that GOD tested Abraham. Samuel said that he would be the Rock (not Dwayne Johnson), and according to Daniel he would appear in a glorified state.

He was not merely a great leader though. Isaiah said that he would be a witness and a shepherd to the people, but that he would speak only in parables. The Psalms said that despite his words being parables, his message would be of grace and forgiveness. Isaiah, Micah, and Zechariah say that he would be GOD's servant. Isaiah said he would be a light for the Gentiles. And according to Deuteronomy, he would speak words of authority given from GOD. And according to Isaiah, he would minister in Galilee, acting as a light in darkness, and he would have the *Ruach ha Kodesh* upon her, and he would filled with the spirit of Wisdom, and have understanding, counsel, might, the knowledge of GOD, and he would fear GOD. And he said that he would have an early understanding of the fear of GOD, and place his trust in GOD. Daniel and First Chronicles said that the Messiah's throne would be everlasting and that his kingdom could not be overthrown. Isaiah, Daniel, and the Psalms all mention that he would be greatly exalted, but Zechariah also said he would be humble. Isaiah said that he would appear like an ordinary man. Samuel said that the Messiah would be exalted by GOD with power and strength, and that he was on the Earth for all nations and all people (not just the Jews). In fact, this message would repeat through both Isaiah, Genesis, and the Psalms several times. According to Isaiah and Zechariah, his ministry would be to the poor and needy and about healing people. Isaiah also said that he would heal the blind, deaf, mute, and lame. Malachi mentioned that his wings[288] would have healing powers. Infants would give praise to him, according to the Psalms. And Zechariah and Isaiah said that he would bring salvation. Wow! It sounds like everyone would have loved him, right? Well, not really...

CHAPTER 5

Zechariah also mentioned that at the time of his coming Israel would have unfit leaders, comparing them to butchers that slaughter a shepherd's flock rather than true shepherds. Isaiah, Zechariah and the Psalms said that he would be despised not only by Gentiles but also by Jews. Isaiah said that men would hide their association with him. The Psalms said that religious and political leaders would conspire against the Messiah. Isaiah said that while Gentiles would trust in the Messiah, Jews would have a hardened heart against him. Indeed, while the Messiah was intended as a cornerstone according to Isaiah and Zechariah, he would be a stumbling block to the Jews according to Isaiah. But Ezekiel said that he is originally sent only to reach the Jews. The Psalms also said this, mentioning him as a stone rejected by the Jews. The Psalms, Isaiah, and Ezekiel all mentioned that the Messiah would be despised (even by his own people), and Zechariah mentioned that he would be rejected and that as a result of this rejection, Israel would lose GOD's protection and would be scattered. In fact, Zechariah went on to explain that he would be rejected in favor of another king. Zechariah said that the Messiah would reject Israel's leaders because of their unbelief, and Deuteronomy said that all who refused to listen to the Messiah would be called to account for their actions.

Haggai mentioned that he would be alive to visit the Temple, Malachi said he would make a sudden appearance at the Temple, and the Psalms said that he would be angered by disrespect toward it. Isaiah said that he would be distressed at the Jews' unbelief. Zechariah said that he would enter Jerusalem riding on a donkey, and mentioned his arrival would be greeted with rejoicing. The Psalms mentioned that the Messiah's own brothers would not believe in him, that he would pray in anguish without ceasing, and that his disciples would fail him and abandon him when he was in need. They

[288] If he held his robes up, it looked sorta like wings. People in ancient times would have understood this.

continued with the prediction that he would be betrayed by a friend who broke bread with him, but this betrayer would have a short life, and another person would be assigned leadership after him. Zechariah said that he would be sold for thirty pieces of silver, which would be donated to a potter's field. They talked about how he would also be accused by false witnesses, but Isaiah mentioned that before these he would be silent. Isaiah said he would have no deceit when he spoke. The Psalms say that he would say that he was the Son of GOD. Then Isaiah said he would be judged, confined and persecuted, beaten and spit upon, oppressed and afflicted, and that his face would be disfigured by severe beatings. Isaiah also mentioned that he was punished even though he was innocent. Samuel mentioned that he would be flogged and punished for sins, which is confirmed by passages in Isaiah. The Psalms said that lots would be cast for his clothes, and they would be divided. They also said that he would be mocked by people shaking their heads at him, surrounded by evil men, beaten by bulky soldiers, and hated by many without cause. And they said that his head would be crowned. Zechariah said that people would call him king.

CHAPTER 6

The Psalms say that people would mock the Messiah, saying, "He trusted GOD, let him deliver him." The Psalms also said that he would cry for GOD but be forsaken. They said he would be offered gall and vinegar, and that he would be crucified and his hands and feet would be pierced. This was seven hundred years before Rome invented crucifixion. Also, because of the way he died, the Psalms say that his heart would explode, flowing with blood and water.

The Psalms mention that not one of his bones would be broken. Zechariah said that his body would be pierced and people would look on at him, and mourn him as a firstborn son. The Psalms also said that he would be stared at while being crucified, and they mentioned that he would be surrounded by both Jews and Gentiles. Zechariah said that he would have wounds in his hands and feet. He would be thirsty prior to his death according to the Psalms. And according to Isaiah, he would have great sorrow and grief, for according to the Psalms he would feel greatly sorry for his enemies and pray for them. And he will be regarded by Isaiah and others as cursed by GOD, for "Cursed is anyone who hangs from a tree" as was written in Deuteronomy.

Isaiah and Zechariah say that he would bear the sin for all mankind, and die for it. Zechariah in particular mentioned that he would die a violent death. Isaiah said that he would be sentenced with other criminals and he would die with the wicked, but also that he would be a sacrificial lamb, a guilt offering for sin. Isaiah said that his suffering and death would satisfy GOD's need for atonement, and that through this the Messiah would be exalted. Isaiah said that he would be buried in a rich man's grave, and the Psalms prophesied that his body would not be allowed to decay.

CHAPTER 7

The prophets said that even death will not end the Messiah. Proverbs told that the Messiah would ascend and descend from Heaven. Daniel and the Psalms also mentioned ascending into Heaven, and the Psalms said he would be at the right hand of GOD, be resurrected, and crowned as King. And he would allow others to rise to life again at his resurrection according to Isaiah. Isaiah predicted that the Messiah would be chosen as intercessor between GOD and man, that he would justify man before GOD, and that he would create a new covenant of salvation for the Gentiles. Jeremiah also says there will be a new covenant for the people of Israel. Malachi said that the Messiah would be the messenger of this new covenant. Isaiah said that the Messiah would bear the penalty for the sins and transgressions of humanity, and Zechariah said that he would bring salvation. The Psalms said the Messiah would come to do GOD's will, and in the name of the LORD. Isaiah said that he would come to Zion as a Redeemer, and to bring Israel back to the LORD. Daniel said he would come to put an end to sin, Isaiah said that he would defeat death, and it was implied in Genesis that his purpose was to defeat Satan. According to Isaiah, he would not judge as humans did based on the externals, but would put his trust in GOD. In so doing, he would please GOD and bring justice to the nations. He would bring freedom from bondage of sin and death, and the sacrifice of his life would peace and reconciliation between man and GOD. The Psalms said that his offering would replace all sacrifices. And Daniel and the Psalms say that the Messiah's throne would be everlasting, and that he would never be overthrown.

JUDGES

CHAPTER 1

After the death of Joshua, Israel was ruled by a series of provisional leaders known as judges.[289] Israel was also occasionally led by prophets. And these people had the power of GOD working through them. They and led them into battle against the Canaanites and the Perizzites, and did not drive them out, but instead put Canaan into forced labor. Likewise, they conquered Beth Shemesh and Beth Anath, and put them into forced labor. So also likewise with the Amorites.

The LORD came upon them, and reminded them of their vow to break the altars of the seven tribes, and not to enter into any covenant with those tribes. Basically, they asked the people of Israel why they were now not keeping their vow. So the LORD said that because they didn't keep their covenant, these tribes would become constant adversaries to them, and their gods would be a snare to their people, leading them astray.

A generation passed, and the people did not know GOD nor follow the law, but instead worshiped Baal and Ishtar. And so, the LORD delivered them into their enemies. But the judges that GOD gave them also delivered them from their enemies. But they did not listen to the judges, but constantly turned to other gods after the current crisis was over. Each time, once the judges were dead, they turned back to sin. Eventually, GOD stopped banishing their enemies. This included the Philistines, the Canaanites, the Sidonians, the Hethites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, and the Jebusites. And they took their wives, and they worshiped their gods. The people of GOD were caught in a cycle of sin, then punishment, and then about forty later sinning again.

Among the judges sent to save the people of Israel was a man named Ehud, of the tribe of Benjamin. Now Israel owed a tribute to Moab. And the king of Moab, Eglon, was a grossly obese man. So Ehud took a sword under his clothes, and after paying tribute, he claimed that he had a message for him. Then he told him that his message was from the LORD, and he stabbed him in the belly. His servants thought Eglon must be doing private business, and Ehud slipped out through the porch. Then Ehud went to the hill country of Ephraim and blew a horn to announce himself. And he led armies against the people of Moab, now that its king was dead.

And after him was Shamgar the son of Anath, who alone struck down six hundred men of the Philistines with a goad for oxen. And he also saved Israel.

CHAPTER 2

Israel again went astray, so GOD gave them to the Canaanites. And Israel cried out to the LORD to save them, and so a prophetess named Deborah appeared. She called Barak from the tribe of Naphtali, but he told her that he would not go without her. But Deborah told him that if she went, the credit would go to her. And GOD confused the chariots of Canaan. Canaan was defeated, but its leader fled to the tents of Jael, the wife of Heber the Kenite. While he was in this tent with her, she managed to drive a tent peg into his brain with a hammer.

Then Deborah sang in praise, "Because the leaders took the lead in Israel, because the people offered themselves willingly, be blessed, LORD. Hear, you kings. Give ear, you princes. I, even I, will sing to the LORD. I will sing praise to the LORD, the GOD of Israel. LORD, when you went forth out of Seir, when you marched out of the field of Edom, Earth trembled, the sky also dropped. Yes, the clouds dropped water. The mountains quaked at the presence of the LORD, even Sinai, at the presence of the LORD, the GOD of Israel. In the days of Shamgar the son of Anath, in the days of Jael, the highways were unoccupied. The travelers walked through byways. The rulers ceased in Israel. They ceased until I, Deborah, arose as a mother in Israel. They chose new gods. Then war was in the gates. Was there a shield or spear seen among forty thousand in Israel? My heart is toward the leaders of Israel, who offered themselves willingly among the people. Bless the LORD. Speak, you who ride on white donkeys, you who sit on saddle blankets, and you who walk by the way. Far from the noise of archers, in the places of drawing water, there they will rehearse the righteous acts of the LORD, the righteous

[289] I do not believe in an end times return of JESUS, seeing him as already returned. But if we hear "And he come again to judge the living and the dead," keep in mind that this is also what the word judge can mean. A temporary ruler that steps in whenever things get bad. He then does this both for those who have died but also for the living.

acts of his rule in Israel. Then the people of the LORD went down to the gates. 'Awake, awake, Deborah. Awaken the multitudes of a nation. Awake, awake, sing a song. Be strong.' Then a remnant of the nobles came down. The people of the LORD marched down to me against the mighty. From Ephraim those who uprooted Amalek came out, following you, Benjamin, among your peoples; out of Makir leaders came down, and out of Zebulun those that handle the staff of office. And the princes of Issachar were with Deborah. They rushed into the valley at his feet. By the watercourses of Reuben, there were great resolves of heart. Why did you sit among the sheepfolds, to hear the piping for the flocks? The kings came and fought, then the kings of Canaan fought at Taanach by the waters of Megiddo. They took no plunder of silver. From the sky the stars fought. From their courses, they fought against Sisera. The river Kishon swept them away, that ancient river, the river Kishon. I will march on with the strength of my soul. Then the horse hoofs pounded because of the galloping of their steeds. Curse Meroz, said the LORD, because they did not come to help the LORD against the mighty. Jael will be blessed above women, above women in the tent. He asked for water. She gave him milk. She brought him curds in a princely bowl. She put her hand to the tent peg, and her right hand to the workmen's hammer. She struck Sisera, she pierced his head; she shattered and struck through his temple. At her feet he collapsed, there he fell down, destroyed. Through the window she looked out. Sisera's mother cried out through the lattice, 'Why is his chariot so long in coming? Why are the hoofbeats of his chariots delayed?' Her wise princesses answered her; indeed, she answers herself, 'Have they not found, have they not divided the spoil? A womb or two for every man; to Sisera a spoil of dyed garments? A spoil of dyed garments embroidered? Of dyed garments embroidered on both sides, for the neck of the plunderer?' So let all your enemies perish, LORD, but let those who love you be as the sun when it rises forth in its strength."
And after she finished singing, the land had rest forty years.

CHAPTER 3

But Israel again did what was evil in the eyes of GOD, and they were delivered over to Midian. And Midian conquered them, and Israel hid in caves and mountains. The Amalekites and the Kedemites also invaded. So they cried to GOD. So the LORD came to Gideon, who was beating wheat in the winepress to hide it from the Midianites.
And he said to Gideon, "The LORD is with you, mighty warrior." But Gideon did not consider himself mighty or a warrior. He said, "Why has all this happened, if the LORD is with us? Did not GOD bring us out from Egypt? But now he has cast us off, and we are delivered into enemy hands." And GOD told him to save Israel from Midian, saying, "Haven't I sent you?" But Gideon told GOD how there was no way that he could save anyone, because he was poor. And GOD told him that he would be with him, and to give him a present. So Gideon readied a young goat, some unleavened cakes, and some broth. He was instructed to pour out the broth. Then the LORD put forth the end of the staff that was in his hand, and touched the meat and the unleavened cakes, and they burst into flames. Then he left Gideon's presence.
Gideon was concerned because he had seen the LORD, but the LORD told him that he wouldn't die. So Gideon built an altar, naming the place "The LORD is Peace." That same night, he went to the wooden altar (Asherah) to pagan gods that his father built, and he tore it down. Then he built a stone altar, and used the wood of the Asherah to burn his animal offering. The next morning, the men of the city saw that their altar to Baal was torn down, and they saw a second bull on the altar being burned. And they asked who had done this, and figured out that it was Gideon. So they asked Gideon's father Joash to bring his son to put him to death. But Joash told them that if Baal was really a god, he ought to be able to kill Gideon himself, since someone has broken his altar. So all of Midian and Amalek and the Kedemites camped as an army against Gideon and against Israel. Now Gideon put the LORD to the test to see if he was with him, asking him to make a fleece of wool wet while all the ground around it was dry. And it was so. And again, but in reverse. And it was so.
Now Gideon found allies in Israel, and managed to collect an army. And when he saw the number of people wanting to fight against the LORD, he counted twenty-three thousand. This was too many, according to Gideon, as the troops might contribute success to their own numbers rather than to GOD. He told anyone who was fearful to go home, but still ten thousand remained. So he led them to the water and watched how they drank. Any who drank using their hands he sent home, but he kept

those who lapped water like dogs he kept. The latter only amounted to three hundred.[290] And so it was, that they did away with the people of Midian. And again, the land was at rest for forty years. And Gideon had seventy sons, for he had many wives. And his second wife gave him a son named Abimelech. And he died of old age, and was buried in his father's tomb. But after he died, the people of Israel again turned to Baal, and to wickedness.

CHAPTER 4

Now Abimelech prophesied against Israel and its waywardness, comparing it to a grove of trees calling for a leader. First, they called for an olive tree to lead them, but the olive was content in its fat which honored GOD and man, and refused to go swing with the other trees. So also was the fig tree content in its sweetness that GOD had given it. And the vine had new wine to take care of. Finally, they chose the bramble, which said, "If in truth you anoint me king over you, then come and take refuge in my shade; and if not, let fire come out of the bramble, and devour the cedars of Lebanon." And Abimelech said that if they actually did choose his authority, he would likewise protect them under Gideon's example. Otherwise, the punishment that was to come would continue. Abimelech was in power for three years, but after that he was betrayed. The people made a wine festival, worshiped other gods, and cursed Abimelech's name under leadership of a man named Gaal. But Zebul, the ruler of the city, heard of this and notified Abimelech.

Now the Abimelech and his men came towards the city, and Gaal noticed them. But Zebul insisted that he was only seeing a shadow from the mountain and not to be alarmed. Gaal insisted, and Zebul told him to go fight them himself. When Gaal came back wounded, Zebul drove him out of the city. And Abimelech killed off the army, attacked the city too, and salted the fields. Then some woman threw a millstone at Abimelech's skull and smashed it. So Abimelech begged one of his troops to run him through with a sword because he could not bear the thought of a lowly *woman* killing him. Thus GOD repaid the wickedness of Abimelech, for killing his seventy brothers. But wait, I thought Abimelech was the good guy?

CHAPTER 5

And after Abimelech came Tola from the tribe of Issachar, who judged Israel for twenty-three years then died. After him, came Jair, who likewise judged Israel twenty-three years, and he had thirty sons who rode around on donkeys. After him, the people of Israel once again did evil, and they fell into the hands of the Philistines. And Israel repented and cried out to GOD. So Jephthah was chosen by GOD to save them. Jephthah was the son of Gilead and son of a prostitute, and his father's sons drove him from his own home and denied him inheritance, for he was a bastard.

And Israel came to war with Ammon. So the elders of Gilead pleaded with Jephthah to be their chief and drive out the people of Ammon. And Jephthah said to them, "Didn't you drive me out of my home? Why should I help you now?" But they persisted, swearing before GOD that they would make him chief and head of their family. So Jephthah came and spoke with the leaders of Ammon, and they accused Israel of taking their land, and demanded it be restored. But Jephthah sent messengers saying, "Israel did not take away the land of Moab, nor the land of the people of Ammon, but when they came up from Egypt, and Israel went through the wilderness to the Red Sea, and came to Kadesh; then Israel sent messengers to the king of Edom, saying, 'Please let me pass through your land.' But the king of Edom did not listen. In the same way, he sent to the king of Moab; but he would not. So Israel stayed in Kadesh. Then they went through the wilderness, and went around the land of Edom, and the land of Moab, and came by the east side of the land of Moab, and they camped on the other side of the Arnon; but they did not come within the territory of Moab, for the Arnon was the boundary of Moab. Israel sent messengers to Sihon king of the Amorites, the king of Heshbon; and Israel said to him, 'Please let me pass through your land to our land.' But Sihon did not trust Israel to pass through his territory; but Sihon gathered all his people together, and camped in Jahaz, and fought against Israel. The LORD, the GOD of Israel, delivered Sihon and all his people into the hand of Israel, and they struck them. So Israel possessed all the land of the Amorites, the inhabitants of that country. They possessed all the territory of the Amorites, from the Arnon even to the Jabbok, and from the wilderness even to the Jordan. So now the LORD, the GOD of Israel, has driven out the

[290] I feel like story of this is inspired by the legend of the Spartans. Or the other way around.

Amorites from before his people Israel, and should you possess them? Won't you possess that which Chemosh your god gives you to possess? So whoever the LORD our GOD has driven out from before us, we will possess. And now are you anything better than Balak the son of Zippor, king of Moab? Did he ever contend against Israel, or did he ever fight against them? While Israel lived in Heshbon and its towns, and in Aroer and its towns, and in all the cities that are along by the side of the Arnon, three hundred years; why did you not liberate them within that time? I therefore have not sinned against you, but you do me wrong by making war against me. The LORD, the Judge, be judge this day between the children of Israel and the people of Ammon."

The king of Ammon did not listen to the words of Jephthah, and prepared to make way. Meanwhile, Jephthah swore to GOD that if he would grant victory in battle, that whatever comes first out of the doors of his his house, he would sacrifice.[291] And indeed, the people of Ammon were delivered into destruction by Israel.

Jephthah went home. Now Jephthah had only one child, a daughter who was still a virgin, and she showed up to dance for him with a tambourine. So Jephthah tore his clothes and wept, and his daughter asked him what was wrong. And he told her that he had made a vow to the LORD and couldn't break it. And his daughter, learning what it was that he intended, asked for two months leave to go to a mountain and mourn her virginity. And after that, she returned, and Jephthah sacrificed her according to his promise.

Now the people of Ephraim[292] were bitter that they were not invited to the fight against Ammon, and threatened to burn his house down. But Jephthah told them that while he was risking his life in battle, they did not come to help and now they wanted to fight. And Jephthah fought with Ephraim, and after this, if any people of Ephraim wanted to enter the area, they were asked to say the word *shibboleth,*[293] for the people of Ephraim pronounced it "sibboleth", and were killed. And forty-two thousand were killed between battle and this. Eventually, Jephthah died and was buried in the city in Gilead.

CHAPTER 6

And eventually Israel turned again to wickedness, and the Philistines took over. And there was a man named Manoah whose wife was barren. And the LORD appeared to her, and told her that she would have a son, but she was to raise him as a Nazirite.[294] Manoah asked to see him too, and he returned. And he explained once again that they were not to drink any wine or strong drink, nor unclean thing, and that no hair was to be cut from his head. And Manoah wanted to offer him a goat, and asked his name. But the LORD said, "Though you detain me, I won't eat of your bread. And if you prepare a burnt offering, you must offer it to the LORD. And why do you ask my name?"

So Manoah took the young goat and a grain offering, and offered it on the rock to the LORD. And Manoah and his wife looked on. Then, when the flame went up toward the sky from off the altar, the LORD appeared in the flame of the altar.[295] And Manoah and his wife looked on, and they fell on their faces to the ground. But the LORD did not appear again to Manoah or to his wife. Manoah said to his wife, "We will surely die, because we have seen GOD." But his wife said to him, "If the LORD meant to kill us, he wouldn't have received a burnt offering and a grain offering from us, neither would he have shown us all these things, nor would he have spoken to us now like this." So the woman bore a son, and named him Samson, and GOD blessed him with great strength.

And Samson met a Philistine woman, and swore to make her his wife. One day, Samson met lion while near a vineyard. And the LORD came upon him, and with great power, he ripped the lion apart.

---

[291] This shows the folly of bartering with GOD, and with the sacrificial system.

[292] Ephraim and Manasseh are descendents of the tribes of Joseph. In Bible history, they seem to have become mostly estranged from other Jews due to Joseph's connections with Egypt. But Mary, JESUS's mother was from the tribe of Ephraim, making JESUS heir of both Judah and Ephraim, uniting previously divided tribes.

[293] The word really means the part of a plant that has grain, alternatively flood or torrent. But it has come to instead be associated with groups that try to use words to test who is part of the in-crowd and who are pretenders. In Marxism and other regimes, they extensively try to weed out enemies, for they are evil.

[294] Nazirites make a vow not to touch dead bodies, not to eat raisins or other fermented things, and particularly not to ever let a razor touch their head.

[295] In other words GOD appeared as an angel before them, in a form that humans can see, and they saw the same face when offering to GOD.

Days later, a group of bees made a nest inside the body of the lion, and he ate honey from within its carcass. He also took some for his mother and father, but did not tell them where it came from.[296] Later at a party, he told a riddle, "If you can explain it to me within the seven days of the feast, and figure it out, then I will give you thirty linen garments and thirty changes of clothing. But if you can't explain it to me, then you will give me thirty linen garments and thirty changes of clothing." And they agreed. So he told them, "Out of the eater came something to eat, out of the strong came something sweet." After three days, they had no answer. So they asked her to ask Samson for them, threatening to burn her house if she refused to tell them. So Samson told her about the lion and the honey. So Samson was empowered by the *Ruach ha Kodesh* and he went to Ashkelon[297] and killed thirty men and took their belonging to give to the people who answered his riddle.
After this, Samson lost his wife to his former friend. After awhile, he showed up with a kid[298] and asked if he would be able to see his wife, but her father forbade it. Her father said, "I most certainly thought that you had utterly hated her; therefore I gave her to your companion. Isn't her younger sister more beautiful than she is? Please take her, instead." Samson was not pleased. And he caught three hundred foxes, and tied them together in pairs, and set their tails on fire. And they fled in every direction, setting fire to the grain of the Philistines, and their vineyards, and their olive groves.
After this, the Philistines wanted to capture Samson, but he was simply too strong. They tried to bind him, but he broke out and killed over a thousand Philistines with the jawbone of a donkey.
Later, he met a woman named Delilah, and fell in love with her. But the Philistines told her to find out his weakness in exchange for a great deal of silver. So she asked him several times, but each time, he lied to her. He would tell her to bind him with specially made ropes or the like, but each time he broke them like they were yarn. Finally, seeing her in tears, he confessed that he had never had his head shaved, and that the source of his power was his Nazirite vow.[299] This time when she tied him, he was unable to break the cords. So they gouged his eyes, bound him in shackles, and made him entertain them for their god Dagon. But little by little, his hair began to grow back. One day, many Philistines were together, a number of over three thousand, and Samson felt the LORD give him strength once again. Despite being blind and bound, he was able to topple the pillars of the building. And in death, he killed more than he had in life.

CHAPTER 7

And in those days, the people were divided and adrift, and every man did that which was right in his own eyes. In times before, when people sinned against the LORD, they would cry out in their oppression, and he would send a judge to save them. Now though, they were neither oppressed nor watched over by a judge, for the LORD left them to their own devices. And so, the people were divided and adrift, and every man did that which was right in his own eyes.
Now there was a man of the hill country of Ephraim, whose name was Micah.[300] He had take eleven hundred pieces of silver from his mother, but now returned it to him. And she made a graven image, an idol out of the silver. And Micah got a Levite to be his priest, and paid him ten silver per year to stay at his house. Now the tribe of Dan wanted a place to live for their inheritance, and they sent five men to scout a home for them to take, and they found the house of Micah, and discovered that he had hired a Levite to act as a priest for this idol. And they asked him to divine whether their path would lead to prosperity.[301] And the Levite told them to go in peace, and that they would find what they sought. So they went out with six hundred men and prepared to take the land of another. But considering the graven image, they went back to take it. And they took the priest with them to be their priest in battle. This in turn caused a dispute between Micah and the people of Dan. Then they went to the town of Laish, a town where the people lived in peace and quiet, and cut the people with the sword and burned the city to the ground. Then they renamed the city stump Dan, after their

---

[296] This would have been against his vows as a Nazirite, as he touched a dead body.
[297] A city in Israel ruled at the time by the Philistines. He would have been killing Philistines to give clothing to other Philistines.
[298] A young goat. He wasn't begging for child support.
[299] Actually, it was the only vestige of it left. He had gone after Philistine women, touched fermented food and dead bodies, and probably had alcohol.
[300] Not necessarily Micah the prophet.
[301] Strictly speaking, as a priest of an idol, he couldn't ask anything of GOD.

ancestor, though its name was Laish. And they set up Micah's graven image there.
It also happened in those days, when Israel was divided and adrift, that there was a certain Levite wandering near the hill country of Ephraim, who took for himself a second wife. But this second wife was angry with him, and she returned to her father's house for four months. So he went out to meet her with his possessions, and when the father saw these, he was friendly to the man and welcomed him. And they ate and drank together for three days. By the fourth, the son-in-law wished to go, but the father kept urging him to stay. After the fifth day, the man took his second wife and headed out, but the father once again asked him to stay. But this time he insisted, and headed back toward Jerusalem. At this time, Jerusalem was under occupation by the Jebusites. His servant asked him to stay the night, but he refused to stay and a city of foreigners, instead heading to Gibeah. But there was nobody to welcome him into their home, until an old man came from working in the field. The old man said that he would take care of them, but warned him not to stay in the square.[302] The man went with his second wife, and he ate and drank with the old man. But evil gay fuckers came in order that they might do some gay sex, especially of the rape kind. And they surrounded the house and demanded that the old man release the Levite so that they might have sex with him. The old man begged him not to do such a thing, for while committed lesbian sex is fine, as it is experimenting in their youth (especially in college) and then later marrying men and having families, male gay sex is never okay, and rape is especially evil, for it is theft and violence and because men are evil.[303] The old man offered his daughter and even the man's second wife. The second wife was sent outside, and the men raped and abused her all night, until finally at dawn they let her go. And the woman went to the door of the man and collapsed there until daybreak. And the man came to fetch her, but noticing she was dead, divided her body into twelve pieces and sent her through the boundaries of Israel.
So the entire congregation of Israel saw this, and they said, "Nothing like this has ever been seen or done before in Israel." Indeed, the same was probably true of any location. And the leaders asked him, "Why has this evil thing happened?" And he explained that he went to Gibeah seeking shelter for the night, but instead his second wife was violated horribly and died of it. And he had divided her as testimony against the town. So the people of Israel agreed that something should be done. And they arose as one people against the town of Gibeah, and they destroyed it to a bloody stump. And they burned the place to the ground. And after this (for the people of Gibeah were of the tribe of Benjamin), they swore not to marry among Benjamin's tribe, at least for awhile. And they built an altar and gave burnt offerings in atonement of this event to the LORD. And any who did not come to this assembly were put to the sword. But the people feared if things continued, there would be a gap in the twelve tribes of Israel. But there was a feast to the LORD that happened from year to year in Shiloh, so they sent some women to wait in the vineyards. And if the women went out to dance in those vineyards, the men of Benjamin could have them. If they could carry them off.
In those days, the people were divided and adrift, and every man did that which was right in his own eyes.[304]

RUTH

CHAPTER 1

The book of Ruth is set when there was a famine in the land. A man of Bethlehem named Elimelech left Israel to visit the country of Moab with his wife Naomi and his two sons. While there, Elimelech dies, and Naomi married off the sons to two girls from the country of Moab. The sons' names are not important, for they die, but the daughters-in-law were Orpah and Ruth. They lived in this country ten years, then Naomi heard that GOD ended the famine. So Naomi left to Israel, to return to her homeland. She told Orpah and Ruth to return to their parent's home. Initially, both said they would return to her, but she talked Orpah out of it. Ruth, however told her, "Where you go, I will go, and

[302] Keep in mind that the last time this sort of thing happened was in Sodom and Gomorrah. This is not a good sign.
[303] This passage is kinda tongue in cheek. I mentioned committed gay relationships and college experimentation while condemning gay rape. Personally, I define marriage as mating for life, with a financial and social commitment, for the raising of children.
[304] This was originally that there was no king, but this felt too much like royalist propaganda. So, I made the focus on the fact that Israel was not one people.

where you stay, I will stay. Your people will be my people, and your GOD my GOD. Where you die, will I die, and there will I be buried."
And so, Naomi let Ruth travel to her to her home at around the barley harvest. When Naomi returned however, she suddenly developed gothic emo disorder and claimed that everyone should now not call her Naomi but Marah. This is a play on the meaning of her name (from Sweet to Bitter). But yeah, Naomi decided that GOD was probably against her, and so she had this whole phase. She grew out her hair and died it black and everything. No, not really.

CHAPTER 2

Naomi saw that Ruth was likely to be lonely as a Moabite in Israel, but fortunately, her deceased husband had a few family friends. So she sent Ruth out to glean[305] at Boaz's field for grain. Now Boaz said to the reapers, "The LORD be with you." And they answered him, "The LORD bless you." Then Boaz noticed Ruth gleaning from morning to late in the day and asked about her. And Boaz welcomed her, offering her water any time she was thirsty, and told her not to go glean from anyone else. Ruth asked Boaz why he was treating her so well, even though she was a foreigner. Boaz told her that he had heard everything she had done for her mother-in-law since her husband died, and that she had even followed her to a strange land. Thus he said, "May the LORD repay your work, and a full reward be given you from the LORD, the GOD of Israel, under whose wings you have come to take refuge."
Boaz offered her a meal with him, while she sat and ate with the other reapers. Boaz told the reapers to even allow her to glean some sheaves of the main harvest,[306] and even pull some out from grains that had been bundled, and not to humiliate her for being there. With all he allowed her, she brought home a basket of barley that held about a bushel, and she brought this home to Ruth.
She told Ruth where she had been, and how much she had picked, and Ruth called her blessed. She told her not to move to some other field, for Boaz was a relative of hers.

CHAPTER 3

Naomi learned that Boaz was preparing barley on the threshing floor, and she told Ruth to anoint herself in oil,[307] put on her best clothes, and go to the threshing floor, but to hide until after he had finished eating and drinking. Then she was to find where he slept, and basically take off his clothes and wait for him to tell her what to do. Yeah. It was a different time.
Anyway, Ruth did as she was asked, and Boaz awoke with a start, wondering why a woman was near him, and why he was exposed. After some explanation, they lay with each other, but Ruth left before the morning. This was at Boaz's request, that none should know that his threshing floor was a sex threshing floor. He did however give her a cloak and quite a bit of barley to take home to Ruth.

CHAPTER 4

Later Naomi decided to sell her husband's land, and Boaz redeemed it, buying it from Ruth and Naomi. Boaz became Ruth's wife, and the people of Israel accepted her child as an heir of Israel, as a son of Naomi (not as a foreign child). And the generations of Boaz made him father of Jesse, who in turn was father to David. And thus, the will of GOD was worked through Ruth.

HISTORIES

JOSHUA

CHAPTER 1

Joshua had followed Moses for years, and seen the great and mighty works that the LORD had done through him. And after Moses died, the LORD spoke to Joshua, "Moses is dead, so rise up and go over the Jordan. Lead this people to the land which I promised them. I will be you as I was for Moses, and no man or woman will be able to stand against you. I will not fail you nor forsake you. I will give this land to inherit that I promised to their fathers. Therefore, be strong and courageous, and observe the

[305] Gleaning was one of the traditions of Jewish law. Basically, the poor could help with farming, and they got a harvest from the corner section of a field.
[306] That is, not just the corner of the field.
[307] Basically, the ancient version of perfume was essential oils. People would coil themselves with costly oil, and those fragrances were used to smell nice. Anointing was also done for the likes of kings, and later for the Messiah.

law that Moses commanded you to follow,[308] and do not turn from them, so that you have success in all of your endeavors."
And Joshua commanded the officers, saying, "Let us prepare food, for we are going to enter Jordan to claim the land. And the LORD has to me that he means us to possess it. So we must be ready for a journey." He addressed the tribe of Reuben, Gad, and two tribes of Joseph, "Remember what Moses commanded you. The LORD your GOD gives you rest, and will give you this land. Your wives, your children, and your livestock will live in this land, but you will pass over it armed. Your men of valor will fight until the LORD has given them rest, just as he has given you. Then they have also will possess the land which the LORD your GOD gives them." So they answered Joshua, "All that you have commanded us we will do, and wherever you send us we will go. Just as we listened to Moses, we also will listen to you. As long as the LORD your GOD is with you, as he was with Moses, we will follow you. Whoever rebels against your commandment, we will put them to death." And so it was that the people followed Joshua, as they did Moses.

CHAPTER 2

So Joshua sent two men as scouts ahead to the land of Jericho, the first area on their way into the Jordan. And the spies entered as travelers, for the gates were closed to any large army. They stayed with a prostitute named Rahab, and slept in her house. But the entrance of these men did not go unnoticed. The king of Jericho was told by the guards, "We saw two Hebrew men enter our gates. We believe they are spies. They went into the house of Rahab." So the king sent for Rahab.
Now Rahab was more than just a prostitute. She was a righteous woman who despised how her land was ruled, and when she heard the men talk about the LORD, she had more respect for them in their earnest faith than for all the people of Jericho, who only saw her in terms of her position. To them, she was Rahab the prostitute, and what she thought and felt did not matter. So it was that when the king summoned her, he also saw her as only someone to pay and have sex with, "I have heard that two Hebrew men entered this city. I know you are a prostitute, so I know they came to you to sleep with you, for you are desirable to many men, including myself. I know these men are likely spies, so if you will tell me where they went, I will appoint you as my royal concubine. You will have a great position of birthing the heirs to this kingdom." And with these words, the king staked a claim on Rahab. But Rahab was a righteous woman who despised how her land was ruled, and despised all the more the one ruling it. So she told the king, "Indeed those men come to my place, and they had their way with me, and did not pay me. After that, it was dark, so they escaped into the city." In her heart though, she said, "Those man did not touch me, even though I felt more for them and their GOD than I have ever felt towards this land or its gods. If you never find them, it will be just as well with me." The previous day, when she left to see the king, she took the men and she hid them among stalks of flax that she had laid to dry on her roof. So she returned from being questioned by the king (which meant that she had no customers that day), and she waited for the sun to set, then she came up to the roof. She said to the men, "I know that the LORD has given you the land, and that the people greatly fear you. For our people have heard how the LORD dried up the water of the Red Sea before you, when you came out of Egypt. And we have heard what you did to the two kings of the Amorites, who were beyond the Jordan, who you utterly destroyed. As soon as we had heard it, the hearts of the people in this land were full of fear, because of you. For the LORD your GOD, he is GOD in Heaven above, and on Earth beneath. And I admire your LORD, but the people of this land fear you and wish to destroy you. But I ask only that when the LORD comes for this land as surely he must, that you will do me this service: since I have dealt kindly with you, that you also will deal kindly with my father's house, and that you will save my father, my mother, my brothers, and my sisters. Deliver our lives from death." The two men said to her, "Our life for yours, even to death, if you do not betray us, when the LORD gives us the land, we will deal kindly and truly with you."

---

[308] I believe that GOD did indeed create the Heaven and the Earth. I am a logic first then faith type, like Thomas my (original) namesake. So it makes sense that the physical world must be created which in turn implies a Creator, and from there my faith and experiences assure me that he *and* she personally is involved in our lives, because GOD cares about us. However, from reading the history of the Jewish people, it is clear from here onward that Judaism started as a cult of personality involving Moses, and the only thing that kept it from being really dangerous is that Moses was an earnest man rather than a greedy one. Even so, some of these laws appear senseless.

So she took the flax she had dried, and she wove a rope of linen. And under the cover of night, she took them down through the window, because her house was on the side of the walls of Jericho. And she told them to head to the mountains and hid there for three days, until their pursuers had returned. And afterward they could return with their people.
They told her, "Because of the oath you had us swear, the LORD will protect you as we also will protect you. For this is as you have done for us. When we return, you will bind a line of scarlet thread in the window which you did let us down by. And any of your household that you gather into the room of this window will be spared, whether they are your mother, father, sisters, or brothers, they will be spared. But any who leaves the house at this time, their death will be on them. Likewise, if you betray our location or our aims to our enemies, the oath is forfeit, and you will not be protected."
Rahab agreed, "According to your words, so be it." She sent them away, and tied a red thread to the window of her house, and hung it on a hook. And concerned that it might not be seen, she tied it in a decorative bow. Now the guards noticed, and the king questioned her once again. And Rahab said to him, "Surely as I have not become your concubine what I do is up to me," and she added, "I found that my house needed a decoration so that my customers would know where to go." Now this angered the king and he threatened her, but Rahab was not afraid, for she trusted in the LORD.[309]
As for the two men, they came to the mountain and stayed there three days, until the pursuers had returned. And their pursuers looked up and down, but GOD clouded their minds with assumptions, and they never thought to look in the mountains. So the two returned to Joshua, and they said, "Truly the LORD has delivered into our hands all the land. Moreover, all the inhabitants of the land melt in fear before GOD."

CHAPTER 3

Joshua rose early in the morning and came to the Jordan, along with all the children of Israel. They lodged there in camps. After three days, the officers went through the midst of the camp and commanded the people, "When you see the ark of the covenant of the LORD and the priests the Levites bearing it, then you are to follow after it from this place. However, you must not come close to it, but maintain a minimum distance of roughly one thousand yards[310] between yourselves and the ark. You must also wash and sanctify yourselves, for tomorrow the LORD will work wonders among you."
Joshua spoke to the priests, saying, "Take up the ark of the covenant, and pass over before the people." They took up the ark of the covenant, and went before the people. The LORD said to Joshua, "Today I will begin to magnify you in the sight of all Israel, that they may know that as I was with Moses, so I will be with you. When you come to the brink of the waters of the Jordan, you will stand still in the Jordan."
Joshua said to the children of Israel, "Come here, and hear the words of the LORD your GOD. Hereby you will know that the living GOD is among you, and that he will without fail drive the Canaanite, and the Hethite, and the Hivite, and the Perizzite, and the Girgashite, and the Amorite, and the Jebusite out from before you. The ark of the covenant of the LORD of all Earth passes over before you into the Jordan." And he commanded them to take twelve men from the children of Israel, one man for each tribe. And the priests who held the ark of the covenant were to the edge of the waters of the Jordan. When the people moved from their tents to pass over the Jordan and the priests who bore the ark of the covenant being before the people, the feet of the priests who bore the ark had dipped in the edge of the water (for the Jordan overflows all its banks all the time of harvest), when the waters which came down from above stood, and gathered up in one heap. And those that went down toward the sea of the Arabah were wholly cut off. Then the people passed over right against Jericho. The priests who bore the ark of the covenant of the LORD stood firm on dry ground in the middle of the Jordan, and all Israel passed over on dry ground, until all the nation had passed completely over the Jordan.

CHAPTER 4

When all the nation had completely passed over the Jordan, that the LORD spoke to Joshua, telling him to take those twelve men from each tribe and find twelve stones and lay them down in the place

[309] I've expanded Rahab's story, because I think it's important that prostitutes get a terrible reputation. And Rahab's is underdeserved. At best, she is mostly forgotten after this story.
[310] Two thousand cubits, specifically, which measures to two thousand nine hundred fifty-three feet.

where they lodged that night. He likewise took those men and told them to pass before him in the presence of the ark, and each should pick up a stone and put it on their shoulder.
But they asked, "What is the meaning of these stones?" So Joshua told them, "Because the waters of the Jordan were cut off before the ark of the covenant of the LORD. When it passed over the Jordan, the waters of the Jordan were cut off. These stones will be for a memorial to the children of Israel forever."
So the children of Israel did as Joshua commanded, and took up twelve stones out of the middle of the Jordan, as the LORD spoke to Joshua, according to the number of the tribes of the children of Israel. And they carried them over with them to the place where they lodged, and laid them down there.
The priests who bore the ark stood in the middle of the Jordan until everything was finished that the LORD commanded Joshua to speak to the people, then the people hurried and passed over. When all the people had completely passed over, the ark of the LORD passed over with the priests in the presence of the people. The descendants of Reuben, and the descendants of Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh, passed over armed before the children of Israel, as Moses spoke to them. About forty thousand men, ready and armed for war, passed over before the LORD to battle to the plains of Jericho.
On that day, the LORD magnified Joshua in the sight of all Israel and they feared him, just as they feared Moses all the days of his life. The LORD spoke to Joshua, saying, "Command the priests who bear the ark of the testimony, that they come up out of the Jordan." And he did so. When the priests who bore the ark of the covenant of the LORD had come up out of the middle of the Jordan, and the soles of the priests' feet were lifted up to the dry ground, that the waters of the Jordan returned to their place, and went over all its banks, as before it gathered up in one heap.
Joshua likewise told them to mound stones in this place, known as Gilgal, and they were to camp here. And the people asked, "What are stones for?" So Joshua explained, "Israel came over this Jordan on dry land. For the LORD your GOD dried up the waters of the Jordan from before you until you had passed over, as the LORD your GOD did to the Red Sea, which he dried up from before us until we had passed over. By this, all of Earth may know the hand of the LORD is mighty, that you may fear the LORD your GOD forever."

CHAPTER 5

The Amorites and the kings of the Canaanites had heard about how the LORD had dried up the Jordan, and their hearts were frightened. They lost the will to fight against the tribes of Israel.
Meanwhile, the LORD said to Joshua, "Make flint knives and circumcise the children of Israel a second time." The reason for this was that a generation had passed since they had left Israel. And while those who left Egypt had been circumcised, the next generation contained people who might not be. This was because the people who came out of Egypt had many sinners against the LORD, who did not obey his commandments, and forty years had pass of them wandering in the wilderness. So these people were not allowed to see the promised land, and their children, though they had proven righteous, were a mixed group in terms of circumcision. So now that it was time to go to the promised land, a land flowing with milk and honey, Joshua commanded that all the males be circumcised.
When they were done circumcising all the nation, they stayed in their places in the camp until they were healed. For not only children but grown adults were cut with the flint knives that day. And the LORD said to Joshua, "Today I have rolled away the disgrace of Egypt from off you." The children of Israel camped in Gilgal. They kept the Passover on the fourteenth day of the month at evening in the plains of Jericho. They ate unleavened cakes and parched grain of the produce of the land on the next day after the Passover, in the same day. The manna ceased on the next day, after they had eaten of the produce of the land. The children of Israel did not have manna any more. Instead, they ate of the fruit of the land of Canaan that year.
When Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted up his eyes and looked, and a man stood in front of him with his sword drawn in his hand. Joshua went to him, and said to him, "Are you for us, or for our adversaries?" And the man said to him, "Truly I am the commander of the army of the LORD. Now I have come." And Joshua fell face down to the ground and worshipped, and said to him, "What does my LORD say to me?" The commander of the army of the LORD said to Joshua, "Take your shoes off of your feet; for the place on which you stand is holy." Joshua did so.

CHAPTER 6

Now Jericho was tightly shut up because of the children of Israel. No one went out, and no one came in. For they had heard Israel was coming. And when they saw Israel was coming, they fervently worshiped to their gods. Now the gods of Jericho were Canaanite idols along with many of nearby cultures: mainly the gods Baal and Ishtar, as well as Arsay the underworld god, Aglibol the moon god, Anat the virgin goddess, Arsu the god of the evening star, Ashima the goddess of fate, Ashtar-Chemosh the wife of Chemosh and goddess of the Moabites, Astarte the goddess of war, Atargatis the goddess of fertility, Attar the god of the morning star, Ba'alah[311] the female counterpart of Ba'al, many other Ba'als (Gebal, Hammon, Hermon, Shamin, Zebub,[312] Zephon), Chemosh the god of war and destruction and the god of the Moabites, Dagon the father of Ba'al and the god of crop fertility, El the god of creation, Eshmun god (or as Baalat Asclepius, a goddess) of healing, Gad the god of fortune,[313] Gupan and Ugar, Ishat the goddess of fire and wife of Moloch, Kotharat the seven goddesses of marriage and pregnancy, Kothar-wa-Khasis the god of craftsme, Lotan the seven-headed serpent god,[314] Malakbel the god of the sun, Margod the god of dance, Melqart the so-called "king of the city", Milcom the god of the Ammonites, Misor the brother of Sydyk, Moloch the god of fire and sacrifice, Mot the god of death, Nikkal-wa-Ib the goddess of orchards, Pidray the goddess of light and lightning, Qadeshu the goddess of love and lust, Qos the god of the Edomites, Resheph the god of plague and healing, Shadrafa the god of medicine, Shachar and Shalim the twin gods of dawn and dusk, Shapash the goddess of the sun, Sydyk the god of justice, Tallai the goddess of winter, Yahweh who was originally a storm and war god of the Canaanites before the people of Israel accepted GOD,[315] Yam the god of sea and rivers, Yarhibol the sun god and lord of the spring, and Yarikh the moon god. These are all the gods that the people of Jericho prayed in desperation to save them, and who turned out powerless when they opposed the LORD. And the people sacrificed their children to appease the supposed whims of these idols in hopes of finding victory. And so it was that when the spies came to Jericho the first time, it was a strong and mighty country filled with great armies and prosperous land, but now it had the stench of death upon it. And the LORD was disgusted with this display, and Joshua told the people, "Nothing of this land is to remain. Only Rahab and her family, who has promised an oath in my sight, will be spared. Destroy the city, the gods, the people, and everything therein."

Joshua also said after hearing the LORD's words, "The LORD has given Jericho into your hand, with its king and the mighty men of valor. All your men of war will march around the city, going around the city once. You will do this six days. Seven priests will bear seven trumpets of rams' horns before the ark. On the seventh day, you will march around the city seven times, and the priests will blow the trumpets. It will be that when they make a long blast with the ram's horn, and when you hear the sound of the trumpet, all the people will shout with a great shout; and the wall of the city will fall down flat, and the people will go up every man straight before him."

Joshua the son of Nun called the priests, and told them what to do. And he said to the people, "Advance. March around the city, and let the armed men pass on before the LORD's ark." It was so, that when Joshua had spoken to the people, the seven priests bearing the seven trumpets of rams' horns before the LORD advanced and blew the trumpets, and the ark of the covenant of the LORD followed them. Joshua commanded the people, saying, "You will not shout, nor let your voice be heard, neither will any word proceed out of your mouth, until the day I tell you to shout. Then you will shout."

So he caused the ark of the LORD to go around the city, going about it once. Then they came into the camp, and lodged in the camp. The next morning, Joshua rose early and did the same. And the people of Jericho wondered what strange thing they were doing. And the armies of Jericho wanted to

---

[311] One of the reasons that I have major suspicions of Bahai religion is that Bahá'u'lláh the leader sounds suspiciously like Ba'alah.

[312] Beelzebub or lord of the flies, often conflated with Satan.

[313] Not to be confused with Gad, one of the sons of Jacob.

[314] Which has remarkable similarities to Orochi and Tiamat, leading to a common deity hypothesis among multiple cultures.

[315] I believe there indeed is a GOD who created everything there is, and who loves all humans. Then there is Yahweh, a storm god who pushed aside another Canaanite storm god Ba'al. I am not in the business of worshiping local or tribal gods, and I have no use for the compartmentalization of paganism. GOD governs all things, not just storms and war.

attack them, but they could not attack them by sword without opening their city and the people of Israel were far enough that they were out of range of their arrows. So it was that the people of Jericho, while in siege, were amused at the display for the first few days. But gradually, being wakened early in the day worsened their nerves, and so also the vibrations from the multitude marching around the city shook the ground.[316] They did this six days.

On the seventh day, they rose early at the dawning of the day, and marched around the city in the same way. Only on this day they marched around the city seven times. On the seventh time, the priests blew the trumpets, Joshua said to the people, "Shout, for the LORD has given you the city. The city will be devoted, even it and all that is in it, to the LORD, and nothing of it will remain. Only Rahab will live, she and everyone who is in the house, because of the oath made by our scouts. But as for you, keep yourselves from the idols and any spoils, so as not to covet and make the camp of Israel accursed. But all the silver, and gold, and vessels of bronze and iron, are holy to the LORD. They will come into the LORD's treasury."

So the people shouted, and the priests blew the trumpets. When the people heard the sound of the trumpet, that the people shouted with a great shout, the walls began to crack. And the wall fell down flat on all sides, and the people went up into the city, and they took the city. And they they utterly destroyed all that was in the city, both man and woman, both young and old, and ox, and sheep, and donkey, with the edge of the sword. They burnt the city with fire, and all that was in it. Only they put the silver, the gold, and the vessels of bronze and of iron into the treasury of the LORD's house.

Joshua commanded them with an oath at that time, saying, "Cursed be the man before the LORD, who rises up and builds this city Jericho. With the loss of his firstborn will he lay its foundation, and with the loss of his youngest son will he set up its gates."

But Joshua said to the two young men who had spied out the land, "Go into the prostitute's house, and bring out from there the woman and all that she has, as you swore to her." So the young men who were spies went in, and brought out Rahab with her father, her mother, her brothers, and all that she had. They also brought out all her relatives, and they set them outside of the camp of Israel. And they were saved before the city burned. And Rahab wanted to leave the people of her country and to follow the LORD. Seeing her desire, one of the two scouts took her to his home. And she shaved her head, trimmed her nails, removed the clothing from before she left, and left her parents. And Rahab married one of the two scouts.[317]

Now, Rahab had a pet fox that she loved, and used to care for. The day of Jericho, it found its way inside the wall, through a crack, but made its way out while the wall shook from the vibrations. And because it had been seen with Rahab, they let it alone when everything else of Jericho was destroyed.[318]

So the LORD was with Joshua, and his fame was in all the land.

CHAPTER 7

If it were as simple as defeating Jericho and destroying it, this would have been fine. But it was revealed that one of the tribe named Achan took some spoils, against the LORD's order. And the LORD was angry, for Jericho was intended to be destroyed, all except gold and silver for vessels. And Joshua was angry on behalf of the LORD, for these were things devoted to be destroyed.[319]

So Joshua was ordered from GOD to lead his men against the land of Ai, and he sent two or three thousand there. But the people of Ai chased the children of Israel away, and about thirty-six men

---

[316] A study on Jericho says that it was not the harmonics of the horn but the subsonic vibrations of all the footsteps that made the walls of the city fall. This implies a GOD that is intimately familiar with science that would not be known by an ignorant tribal people, because he created all laws of physics.

[317] This is part of the Deuteronomic code concerning what to do with women from a foreign land. She is willingly following the law though, rather than being a captive.

[318] An addition, mainly because I am very fond of the *In The Beginning* anime.

[319] I mentioned earlier how gold and silver are effectively pretty idols, and how the Nephilim used these to control humans. The text tells us how these vessels are so important, but I do not believe any deity worth our worship *really* cares about them. It is more that GOD cares for the Jewish people and is frustrated that they care more about things. Indeed, this land is supposedly cursed to never be built on again, but Jericho exists as a city today. I think this is Joshua being angry on GOD's behalf, whereas actually was satisfied with its ruin, and the order to devote the land was under his leadership. Which in turn changes the focus of the passage to come, where GOD blames Joshua instead of the people.

were killed when they fled. And when Joshua heard this, he tore his clothes, and he and the elders put dust on their heads. And he asked the LORD, "Why LORD, have you brought us to this land only to have us perish? Would it not have been sufficient[320] for us to live in the land of the Jordan? Why have we been made to flee before our enemies? We will be surrounded and cut off from the face of the Earth. What will happen to our legacy?"
But the LORD said to Joshua, "Get up. Why are you fallen on your face like that? The children of Israel have disobeyed a command that you set before them. My desire was only to utterly destroy the people of Jericho, which I have done. But you condemned them for wanting souvenirs. You have sinned, Joshua, for taking my name in vain, and claiming that I care what happens to idols of gold and silver. And Israel has sinned for their greed of such idols, but you have told the people that you speak on my behalf and know what I want or do not want. And you have punished them as if you were GOD. Can you stand in my sight? Do you have my power to heal and to harm, to create or destroy? No, before my countenance, can do nothing but flee before me. Therefore the children of Israel can't stand before their enemies and turn their backs. Just as you punished people over mere objects that you claimed were devoted to destruction, when my only desire concerned the people who had sinned against me, so also will the people that you lead be devoted to destruction. I will not be with you any more, unless you yourself destroy these idols that fixate you, and repent of taking my name."
The LORD continued, "Get up and sanctify yourself before me. Remove your attachments and fixations. In the morning, you will be brought near by your tribes. The tribe and the family and even the household will be selected, and until the man will be burnt with the thing that you say offends me." So Joshua rose up and selected from the family of the Zerahites, then Zabdi was selected, and then his grandson Achan, who had taken spoils for himself was selected from Zabdi's household.
So Joshua said to Achan, "My son, please give glory to the LORD, the GOD of Israel, and make confession to him. Tell me now what you have done. Do not hide it from me."
Achan answered Joshua, and said, "I have sinned against the LORD, the GOD of Israel, and this is what I have done. When I saw among the spoil a beautiful garment from Shinar, two hundred shekels of silver, and a bar of gold weighing fifty shekels, then I coveted them and took them. They are hidden in the ground in the middle of my tent, with the silver under it."
So Joshua sent messengers, and they ran to the tent. It was hidden in his tent, with the silver under it. They took them from the middle of the tent, and brought them to Joshua and to all the children of Israel. They laid them down before the LORD.
Joshua, and all Israel with him, took Achan the son of Zerah, the silver, the robe, the wedge of gold, and also took all that he had including his sons, his daughters, his cattle, his donkeys, his sheep, and his tent. And Joshua said, "Why have you troubled us? May the LORD will trouble you this day." All Israel stoned him with stones, and they burned them with fire. And they raised over him a great heap of stones. The LORD turned from the fierceness of his anger. And the LORD said to Joshua, "From now on, I will tell you if a land is truly to be devoted to destruction, or just its people. This man's blood is on your hands."[321]

CHAPTER 8

And the LORD said to Joshua, "Go again to the land of Ai, for I have given the people into your hand. You will do as you did with Jericho, except that you are to plunder its spoils and its livestock.[322] Do not be afraid, neither be dismayed. For I am with you." So Israel set an ambush for the city, taking thirty thousand men. And they took also a small unit, of about five thousand men, so that the people of Ai would open their gates and pursue their men, and thus be ambushed.
Joshua sent them out and they went to set up the ambush, camping between Bethel and Ai on the west side of Ai, but Joshua stayed among the people that night. Joshua rose up early in the morning,

---

[320] This idea is called the Dayenu, or "it would have been sufficient." This invasion of Jericho happens around the time of Passover.
[321] This passage is greatly changed in focus from its original. This is because I believe that Joshua here was acting as though GOD had commanded this. But GOD is a spiritual being, and does not care about vessels of gold and silver (though he does care when people intentionally try to disrespect him, as in Daniel where they use the temple vessels for a night of drinking). So this is Joshua essentially ruining a man because he wanted souvenirs. Nonetheless, GOD does punish Israel for Joshua's leadership.
[322] This is why I think it is a command of Joshua and not the LORD that Jericho was not to be plundered, because they actually *are* commanded to plunder Ai.

and he went with the elders, before the people to Ai. And all the people, even the men of war who were with him, went up, and drew near, and came before the city, and camped on the north side of Ai. Now there was a valley between him and Ai, for the LORD ordained it in advance of this strategy. So the people who were to ambush squatted in the valley, and the five thousand advanced toward the city. And the king of Ai saw the approach of the people and he sent his his army out. And Joshua and the others feigned defeat, and moved away from the army into the wilderness. Then the army pursued them, and the gate was left open.
Then the LORD said to Joshua, "Throw the javelin that is in your hand toward Ai, for I will give it into your hand." Joshua threw the javelin that was in his hand toward the city. And the ambush was signalled, and the troops ran and entered the city, and they set it on fire. And the smoke from the city ascended to Heaven as a pleasing scent to the LORD,[323] and the people of Ai had nowhere to run. So the children of Israel closed in on them from all sides. And the people of Ai were killed. Then they captured the king, and all the people of the land of Ai were cut down by the sword. He hanged the king of Ai on a tree until the evening, and at the sundown Joshua commanded they took his body down from the tree,[324] and threw the body at the entrance of the gate of the city, and raised a great heap of stones. Only the livestock and the spoil of that city Israel took for prey to themselves, according to the word of the LORD which he commanded Joshua. And it is in ruins to this day.[325]
Then Joshua built an altar to the LORD, the GOD of Israel, on Mount Ebal, as Moses commanded the children of Israel, as it is written in the book of the law of Moses, "an altar of uncut stones, on which no man has touched with an iron tool." They offered burnt offerings on it to the LORD, and sacrificed peace offerings. He wrote there on the stones a copy of the law of Moses, which he wrote in the presence of the children of Israel.
And all of Israel, and their elders and officers, and their judges, stood on this side of the ark and on that side before the priests the Levites, who carried the ark of the LORD's covenant, the foreigner as well as the native. And half of them stood in front of Mount Gerizim, and half of them in front of Mount Ebal, as Moses had commanded at the first, that they should bless the children of Israel.
Afterwards, he read all the words of the law, the blessing and the curse, according to all that is written in the book of the law. There was not a word of all that Moses commanded, which Joshua did not read before all the assembly of Israel, with the women, the little ones, and the foreigners who were among them.

CHAPTER 9

When all the kings of Lebanon, of the Hethite, the Amorite, the Canaanite, the Perizzite, the Hivite, and the Jebusite, heard of it, they gathered themselves together to fight with Joshua and with Israel together.
But when the inhabitants of Gibeon heard what Joshua had done to Jericho and to Ai, they resorted to a ruse, and went and made as if they had been ambassadors, and took old sacks on their donkeys, and wineskins, old and torn and bound up, and old and patched shoes on their feet, and wore old garments. All the bread of their provision was dry and moldy. They went to Joshua to the camp and they told him, "We have come from a far country. Now therefore make a covenant with us." But the men of Israel said to them, "What if you live among us. How could we make a covenant with you?" They said to Joshua, "We are your servants." Joshua said to them, "Who are you? Where do you come from?" So they said to him, "We have come from a very far country because of the name of Yahweh. For we have heard of his fame, all that he did in Egypt, and all that he did to the two kings of the Amorites who were beyond the Jordan, to Sihon king of Heshbon and to Og king of Bashan. Our elders and all the inhabitants of our country spoke to us, saying, 'Take provision in your hand for the journey, and go to meet them.' So here we are. This bread we took hot for our provision out of our houses on the day we went out to go to you, but now, it is dry and has become moldy. And these wineskins, which we filled were new, but now they are torn. These our garments and our shoes have become old because of the very long journey."

---

[323] Like a sacrificial offering.
[324] Which they did because it is a cursed
[325] Unlike Jericho, which has been rebuilt. Again, this is why I think it was Joshua's command to destroy Jericho, and not the LORD's, because Ai was not saved while Jericho was.

The men of Israel sampled their provisions, and did not ask counsel from the mouth of the LORD, who would have told them the truth. So leaders of the congregation made peace with them and made a covenant with them, to let them live. At the end of three days after they had made a covenant with them, the people of Israel heard that they were their neighbors, and that they lived among them. So the children of Israel traveled and came to their cities on the third day. Now their cities were Gibeon, Chephirah, Beeroth, and Kiriath Jearim, and the children of Israel did not strike them, because the leaders of the congregation had sworn to them by Yahweh, who was said to be the GOD of Israel.[326] And the whole congregation murmured against the leaders. But all the leaders said to all the congregation, "We have sworn to them by Yahweh, and now therefore we may not touch them. Therefore we let them live, because of the oath which we swore to them." And so it was that a false vow was allowed to stand, for the children of Israel did not know the name of the LORD. Since the leaders said to them, "Let them live," all the congregation did as the leaders had spoken to them.
Joshua called for the people of Gibeon, and he spoke to them, saying, "Why have you deceived us, saying, 'We are very far from you,' when you live among us? Why have you sworn falsely to the LORD? Now therefore you are cursed, so you will be wood cutters and drawers of water for the house of my GOD."
They answered Joshua, and said, "Because we were certainly told how your GOD commanded Moses to give you all the land, and to destroy all the inhabitants of the land from before you. Therefore we were very afraid for our lives because of you, and have done this thing. Now, we are in your hand. Do to us as it seems good and right to you to do."
He did so to them, and delivered them out of the hand of the children of Israel, so that they did not kill them. That day Joshua made them wood cutters and drawers of water for the congregation and for the altar of the LORD in the place which he should choose.

CHAPTER 10

When Adoni-Zedek king of Jerusalem heard how Joshua had taken Ai and had utterly destroyed it, as he had done to Jericho and her king, and how the inhabitants of Gibeon had tricked the children of Israel into making peace with them and now lived as servants, he was very afraid. Gibeon was a great city, as one of the royal cities, and it was greater than Ai, for all its men were mighty.
So Adoni-Zedek king of Jerusalem sent to Hoham king of Hebron, to Piram king of Jarmuth, to Japhia king of Lachish, and to Debir king of Eglon, saying, "Come up to me, and help me, and let us strike Gibeon; for it has made peace with Joshua and with the children of Israel." So the five kings of the Amorites, the king of Jerusalem, the king of Hebron, the king of Jarmuth, the king of Lachish, the king of Eglon, gathered themselves together and camped against Gibeon, in order to make war against it.
The men of Gibeon sent to Joshua to the camp to Gilgal, saying, "Do not abandon us. Come up to us quickly, and save us, and help us. All the kings of the people that dwell in the hill country have gathered together against us." So Joshua went up from Gilgal, and all the mighty men of valor went with him. And the LORD said to Joshua, "Do not fear them, for I have delivered them into your hands. Not a man of them will stand before you." Joshua therefore went up from Gilgal all night, and the LORD confused them before Israel, and he killed them with a great slaughter at Gibeon, and chased them by the way of the ascent of Beth Horon, and chased them back to Azekah and to Makkedah. And it happened, as they fled from before the children of Israel while they were at the descent of Beth Horon, that the LORD cast down hail from the sky[327] on them as far as Azekah to stone them to death, and they died. There were more who died from the hailstones than who the children of Israel killed with the sword.
But the battle drew on like it would last more than a day, and at night, the men against Israel might sneak around and thus have an advantage. So Joshua spoke to the LORD in the day that this

[326] Once again, I'm hammering home the idea that the Hebrew people do not know the name of their GOD, and falsely call him Yahweh, when his name is I AM. Yahweh is a Canaanite idol, while the real GOD insisted they leave all idolatry behind. So in mistaking their GOD for Yahweh, it is effectively a hint that this is a false vow.
[327] I was originally going to change this in a major way, because stones from the sky sounded like meteors. I assume a flat Earth, and meteors aren't a real thing, so Sodom and Gomorrah get an underground eruption of fire and brimstone. But here what happens is hailstones, so the changes I made were moot.

happened, and he said, "Sun, stand still on Gibeon. You, moon, stop in the Valley of Aijalon. Stars, do not come here." The sun stood still, and the moon stayed, and the stars would not come until the nation had avenged themselves of their enemies. Isn't this written in the book of Jashar? The sun stayed in the midst of the sky, and did not hurry to go down though the day should have ended.[328] There was no day like that where the LORD so listened to the voice of a man, for the LORD fought for Israel.

And after this, Joshua returned to the camp to Gilgal, and all Israel with him. These five kings fled and hid themselves in the cave at Makkedah. And Joshua was told by his scouts, "The five kings are found, hidden in the cave at Makkedah." So Joshua said, "Roll large stones to the mouth of the cave, and set men by it to guard them. But do not stay there. Pursue your enemies, and attack them from the rear. Do not allow them to enter into their cities, for the LORD your GOD has delivered them into your hand."

When Joshua and the children of Israel had finished killing them until they were consumed, some nonetheless got away despite their best efforts. So the remnant which remained of them had entered into the fortified cities, that all the people returned to the camp to Joshua at Makkedah in peace. None any more insulted to bravery or might of any of the children of Israel.

Then Joshua said, "Open the mouth of the cave, and bring those five kings out of the cave to me." They did so, and brought those five kings out of the cave to him: the king of Jerusalem, the king of Hebron, the king of Jarmuth, the king of Lachish, and the king of Eglon. It happened, when they brought those kings out to Joshua, that Joshua called for all the men of Israel, and said to the chiefs of the men of war who went with him, "Come near, put your feet on the necks of these kings." They came near, and put their feet on their necks. Joshua said to the children of Israel, "Do not be afraid, nor be dismayed. Be strong and of good courage, for the LORD will do this to all your enemies against who you fight." Afterward Joshua struck these kings, put them to death, and hanged them on five trees. They were hanging on the trees until the evening. At the time of the going down of the sun, Joshua commanded, and they took them down off the trees, and cast them into the cave where they had hidden, and laid great stones on the mouth of the cave.

Joshua took Makkedah on that day, and struck it with the edge of the sword, with its king. He utterly destroyed them and all those who were in it. He left none remaining. He did to the king of Makkedah as he had done to the king of Jericho. Then Joshua passed from Makkedah, and all Israel with him, to Libnah, and fought against Libnah. And he dealt with it as Makkedah. And the same was done to Lachish. But Horam, the king of Gezer came to help Lachish, so he also struck their people and left none remaining. He continued to Eglon, and it met with the same fate. Then he continue to Hebron and Debir, and all of them were snuffed from the land. So Joshua struck all the land, the hill country, and the Negev, and the lowland, and the slopes, and all their kings. He left none remaining, but he utterly destroyed all that breathed, as the LORD, the GOD of Israel, commanded. Joshua took all these kings and their land at one time, because the LORD, the GOD of Israel, fought for Israel. Joshua returned with all of Israel to the camp to Gilgal.

CHAPTER 11

Then Jabin king of Hazor heard of this, and he sent to Jobab king of Maron to the king of Shim'on, to the king of Achshaph, and to the kings who were on the north, the hill country, south of Kinnereth, the lowland, in the heights of Dor on the west, to the Canaanite on the east and on the west, and the Amorite, and the Hethite, and the Perizzite, and the Jebusite in the hill country, and the Hivite under Hermon in the land of Mizpah. One wonders briefly how there were still people left to oppose the children of Israel, but apparently this was so. And all of them went out, as many people as the grains of sand on the seashore with their horses and chariots. And all united together to try to wipe Israel off the map. For they were a people of free slaves, who fought to make a nation of free slaves, and who served a GOD who would eventually put an end to oppression and slavery, and the other forms of wickedness on the Earth, and they sense that if Israel succeeded, their days were numbered.[329] So the

---

[328] Now, we don't know what is written in the book of Jashar, but this is consistent with a flat Earth. The round Earthers like to write around this by claiming that the Earth stood still, but you can clearly see from the text that Joshua caused the sun and moon (and stars) to halt in their path.

[329] This is editorial of course, but basically, all of the world seems to like to try to get rid of Israel, making excuses for the real

many peoples of this land united to fight against Israel.
And indeed their armies seemed to be unfathomably large to the point where one could not see past them on the horizon. But the LORD said to Joshua, "Do not be afraid because of them. By this time tomorrow, I will deliver their bodies up before Israel. You will hamstring their horses and burn their chariots with fire." So Joshua came, and all the people of war with him, against them by the waters of Merom suddenly, and fell on them. The LORD delivered them into the hand of Israel, and they struck them, and chased them to Greater Sidon, and to Misrephoth Maim, and to the Valley of Mizpeh eastward. They struck them until they left them none remaining. Joshua did to them as the LORD told him. He hamstrung their horses and burnt their chariots with fire. Joshua took Hazor, and struck its king with the sword, for Hazor was the head of all those kingdoms. They struck all the living who were in this horde with the edge of the sword, utterly destroying them. And he burnt Hazor with fire. And he captured all the cities of those kings, and he struck them with the edge of the sword, and utterly destroyed them. But as for the cities, Israel burned none of them except Hazor.
The children of Israel took all the spoil of these cities (including livestock) as spoils for themselves. But every man they struck with the edge of the sword, until they had destroyed them. They did not leave any who breathed. So Joshua captured all that land, the hill country, all the Negev, all the land of Goshen, the lowland, the Arabah, the hill country of Israel, and the lowland of the same. He took all their kings, struck them, and put them to death.
There was not a city that made peace with the children of Israel, except the inhabitants of Gibeon, through trickery. They took all in battle. For it was of the LORD to harden their hearts, to come against Israel in battle, that he might utterly destroy them.
Joshua also cut off the *anakim*[330] from the hill country, from Hebron, from Debir, from Anab, and from all the hill country of Judah, and from all the hill country of Israel. Joshua likewise destroyed them with their cities. There were none of the *anakim* left in the land of the children of Israel. Only in Gaza, in Gath, and in Ashdod, did some remain. So Joshua took the whole land and Joshua gave it for an inheritance to Israel according to their divisions by their tribes. Then the land had rest from war.

CHAPTER 12

Now Joshua was old and well stricken in years. The LORD said to him, "You are old and advanced in years, and there remains yet very much land to be possessed. This is the land that still remains: all the regions of the Philistines, and all the Geshurites, from the Shihor which is before Egypt, to the border of Ekron northward which is counted as Canaanite, the lands of the Gazites, the Ashdodites, the Ashkelonites, the Gathites, and the Ekronites. There is also the Avvim on the south, from Arah that belongs to the Sidonians to Aphek, to the border of the Amorites, the land of the Gebalites, and all Lebanon, toward the sunrise, from Baal Gad under Mount Hermon to Lebo Hamath, the hill country from Lebanon to Misrephoth Maim, and the land of the Sidonians. I will drive out from before the children of Israel: only you allocate it to Israel for an inheritance, as I have commanded you." And Joshua sighed heavily at the work needed to do still in order to crate a unified Israel.
But the LORD did not ask this of him. Instead, the LORD said, "You will divide this land as your inheritance among the tribes. You will divide the land from the Jordan River to the Great Sea, with the Great Sea as the boundary to the tribes of Simeon, Judah, Dan, Naphtali, Asher, Issachar, Zebulun, and Benjamin, and the half-tribe of Manasseh from Joseph's line. But you are also to divide land between the two tribes of Reuben and Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh from Joseph's line. This land is to be land east of the Jordan: from the Aroer near the edge of the Valley of the Arnon, to the plain of Medeba, to Dibon, to the cities of the Amorites, to border of the people of Ammon, to Gilead and the border of the Geshurites and Maacathites, to Mount Hermon, to the lands from Bashan to Salecah, to the kingdom of Og. They are given the many lands of the outskirts, but they have a duty to defend them.
Now the tribe of Levi were given to live in the same lands as the tribes of Simeon, Judah, Dan, Naphtali, Asher, Issachar, Zebulun, and Benjamin, and the half-tribe of Manasseh from Joseph's line. But they did not inherit land. For the Levites were a priestly tribe, and their inheritance were the fire

---

reason.
[330] These are giants, survivors of the same sort as the Nephilim. Nephilim are supposed to be dead from the flood, but these imperfect copies exist. These are not as large as the Nephilim, but they were nonetheless mostly killed as well.

offerings of the LORD." And Moses had already mention the regions which the land was to divided, so Joshua knew the regions that this land was to be split according the property of each tribe.

CHAPTER 13

The children of Israel did as the LORD commanded Moses, and they divided the land. Then the descendants of Judah drew near to Joshua in Gilgal. Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite said to him, "You know the thing that the LORD spoke to Moses concerning me and concerning you in Kadesh Barnea. I was forty years old when Moses sent me from Kadesh Barnea to spy out the land. I brought him word again as it was in my heart. Nevertheless, my brothers who went up with me were frightened and terrified the people. But as for me, I wholly followed the LORD my GOD. Moses swore on that day, saying, 'Surely the land where you walked will be an inheritance to you and to your children forever, because you have wholly followed the LORD my GOD.' Now, the LORD has kept me alive, as he spoke, these forty-five years, from the time that the LORD spoke this word to Moses, while Israel walked in the wilderness. Now, I am eighty-five years old, today. I am still as strong today as I was in the day that Moses sent me."

And Joshua asked him what it was that Caleb wished of him. So Caleb requested, "Give me this hill country, of which the LORD spoke in that day. For you heard in that day how the *anakim* were there, and great and fortified cities. It may be that the LORD will be with me, and I will drive them out, as the LORD spoke."

So Joshua blessed him, and he gave Hebron to Caleb for an inheritance. Therefore Hebron became the inheritance of Caleb, because he wholly followed the LORD, the GOD of Israel. Now the name of Hebron before was Kiriath Arba, after the greatest man among the *anakim*. And the land had rest from war.

CHAPTER 14

The lot for the tribe of the descendants of Judah according to their families was from the border of Edom to the Negev in the far south. Their south border was from the uttermost part of the Salt Sea,[331] from the bay that looks southward, went out west to the Wadi of Egypt, and the east border was the Salt Sea to the end of the Jordan. The border of the north quarter was from the bay of the sea at the end of the Jordan. This is the border of the descendants of Judah according to their families.

To Caleb the son of Jephunneh he gave a portion among the descendants of Judah, according to the commandment of the LORD to Joshua. And Caleb drove out the three sons of Anak: Sheshai, and Ahiman, and Talmai, the descendants of Anak. He went up against the inhabitants of Debir. Now the name of Debir formerly was Kiriath Sepher.

And Caleb said, "He who strikes Kiriath Sepher, and takes it, to him will I give Achsah my daughter as wife." Othniel, the brother of Caleb, took it. So Caleb he gave him Achsah his daughter as wife. When Achsah came, she had Othniel ask her father for a field. She got off of her donkey, and Caleb said, "What do you want?" She said, "Give me a blessing. Because you have set me in the land of the Negev, give me also springs of water." He gave her the upper springs and the lower springs.

This is the inheritance of the tribe of the descendants of Judah according to their families. As for the Jebusites, the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the descendants of Judah couldn't drive them out; but the Jebusites lived with the descendants of Judah at Jerusalem.

CHAPTER 15

The lot likewise came out for the descendants of Joseph from the Jordan at Jericho, to the waters of Jericho on the east, to the wilderness, going up from Jericho through the hill country to Bethel. It went out from Bethel to Luz, and passed along to the border of the Archites and it went down westward to the border of the Japhletites, to the border of Lower Beth Horon, even to Gezer; and ended at the sea. This was the border of the descendants of Ephraim according to their families. The border of their inheritance eastward was Ataroth Addar, to Upper Beth Horon. then westward at Michmethath on the north of Termah, then it went down from Janoah, to Naaratah, reached to Jericho, and went out at the Jordan. From Tappuah the border went along westward to Wadi Kanah and ended at the sea. This is the inheritance of the tribe of the descendants of Ephraim according to their families, together with the cities which were set apart for the descendants of Ephraim in the

[331] The Dead Sea, of course. This was the likely location for the events of Sodom and Gomorrah.

midst of the inheritance of the descendants of Manasseh, all the cities with their villages. The descendants of Joseph, Manasseh and Ephraim, took their inheritance.

CHAPTER 16

The firstborn of Manasseh was a man named Makir (he was the father of Gilead), a man known for prowess in war. And he had many descendants who in turn had descendants. But one of these was he man named Zelophehad, who had no sons at all, but he had many daughters who were named Mahlah, Noah, Hoglah, Milcah, and Tirzah. They came before Joshua and said, "The LORD commanded Moses to give us an inheritance." So Joshua gave them also an inheritance.

So ten parts fell to Manasseh, besides the land of Gilead and Bashan, which is beyond the Jordan, because the daughters of Manasseh had an inheritance among his sons. The border for the daughters of Manasseh was from Asher to Michmethath, which is before Shechem. The border continued along to the right hand to Jashub and to En Tappuah on the border of Manasseh, then went down to Wadi Kanah, southward of the wadi. These cities belonged to Ephraim among the cities of Manasseh. The border of Manasseh was on the north side of the wadi, and ended at the sea. Southward it was Ephraim's, and northward it was Manasseh's, and the sea was his border. They reached to Asher on the north, and to Issachar on the east. And Manasseh had in Issachar and in Asher, Beth Shean and its towns, and Ibleam and its towns, and the inhabitants of Dor and its towns, and the inhabitants of Endor and its towns, and the inhabitants of Taanach and its towns, and the inhabitants of Megiddo and its towns. These comprised three regions.

Yet the descendants of Manasseh couldn't drive out the inhabitants of those cities; but the Canaanites would dwell in that land. So when the children of Israel had grown strong, that they put the Canaanites to forced labor, and did not utterly drive them out.

The descendants of Joseph spoke to Joshua, saying, "Why have you given me just one lot and one part for an inheritance, since I am a great people, because the LORD has blessed me so far?" Joshua said to them, "If you are a great people, go up to the forest, and clear land for yourself there in the land of the Perizzites and of the Rephaim, since the hill country of Ephraim is too narrow for you." The descendants of Joseph said, "The hill country is not enough for us. All the Canaanites who dwell in the land of the valley have chariots of iron,[332] both those who are in Beth Shean and its towns, and those who are in the Valley of Jezreel."

Joshua spoke to the house of Joseph, even to Ephraim and to Manasseh, saying, "You are a great people, and have great power. You will not have one lot only, but the hill country will be yours. Although it is a forest, you will cut it down, and its farthest extent will be yours. You will drive out the Canaanites, though they have chariots of iron, and though they are strong."

CHAPTER 17

The LORD spoke to Joshua, "Tell the children of Israel to assign cities of refuge, that any person who kills another accidentally may flee there. These places will be refuge from an avenger, and a person may plead in their defense, if indeed it can be found that they have killed unintentionally. They will declare their cause to the elders, and they will be taken into the city, to give them shelter. He will dwell in that city until he stands before the congregation for judgement, or until the death of the high priest that will be in those days. After that, the manslayer will return, and come to his own city, where he fled from."

They set apart these cities as cities of refuge: Kedesh in Galilee in the hill country of Naphtali, Shechem in the hill country of Ephraim, and Kiriath Arba (that is, Hebron) in the hill country of Judah. Beyond the Jordan at Jericho eastward, they assigned Bezer on the wilderness plateau out of the tribe of Reuben, Ramoth in Gilead out of the tribe of Gad, and Golan in Bashan out of the tribe of Manasseh. These were the appointed cities for all the children of Israel, and for the stranger who sojourns among them, that whoever kills any person unintentionally might flee there, and not die by the hand of the avenger, until he stands before the congregation.

CHAPTER 18

Now the whole congregation of the children of Israel assembled themselves together at Shiloh, and set

---

[332] Chariots of iron seems to be a go-to excuse for why the LORD can't or won't help you prevail in battle. More likely, it's their own fear and lack of faith preventing them.

up the Tent of Meeting there. And the land was subdued before them. But seven tribes remained among the children of Israel, which had not yet divided their inheritance. And Joshua realized this why they were assembled together.
Joshua said to the children of Israel, "How long will you neglect to go in to possess the land, which the LORD, the GOD of your fathers, has given you? Appoint for you three men of each tribe. I will send them and they will arise, walk through the land, and they will come to me and describe it. They will divide it into seven portions. Judah will live in his borders on the south, and the house of Joseph will live in their borders on the north. You will survey the land into seven parts, and I will cast lots for you here before the LORD our GOD. For the Levites have no portion among you; for the priesthood of the LORD is their inheritance. And the others have received their land already." So the men went and surveyed the land by cities, and they wrote it on a scroll. Then Joshua cast lots for them in Shiloh before the LORD, and divided the land to the children of Israel according to this lot. And so it is that parcels of land to this day are called "lots." For the LORD has divided all land that people own for all time by the lot system.
The lot for the descendants of Benjam went from the border on the norther quarter from Jordan, including part Jericho westward to the hill country to the wilderness of Beth Aven, then passed southward to Luz (known as Bethel) to Ataroth Addar and went through places like the valley of Ben Hinnom before tracing back east to Jericho.
The second lot came out for Simeon, and they had for their inheritance these cities: Beersheba, Moladah, Hazar Shual, Balah, Ezem, Eltolad, Bethul, Hormah, Ziklag, Beth Marcaboth, Hazar Susah, Beth Lebaoth, Sharuhen. All total, they had thirteen cities with their villages, as well as En Rimmon, Token, Ether, and Ashan, and all the villages that were around these cities to Baalath Beer, Ramath Negev. But this land was too much for them to properly manage, so they divided their inheritance again among their brothers.
And the third lot came up for the descendants of Zebulun, and it border started at Sadud, went up westward to Maralah and reached to Dabbesheth, then it reached to the wadi that is before Jokneam. And it turned from Sadud eastward toward the sun to the border of Chisloth Tabor then out to Daberath and up to Japhia. From there it passed along to Gath Hepher and Eth Kazin, then it went out to Rimmon which bends toward Neah, then turned north to Hannathon, and it ended at the Valley of Iphtah El.
The fourth lot came out for Issachar, according to their families. And their border was to Jezreel, Chesulloth, Shunem, Hapharaim, Shion, Anaharath, Daberath, Kishion, Ebez, Remeth, Engannim, En Haddah, Beth Pazzez. And their border reached to Tabor, Shahazumah, Beth Shemesh, and ended at the Jordan, to cover sixteen cities with their villages.
The fifth lot came out for the tribe of the descendants of Asher according to their families. Their border was from Helkath (also including Hali, Beten, Achshaph, Allammelech, Amad, and Mishal) and it reached to Carmel westward, then it turned eastward to Beth Dagon, and reached the Valley of Iphtah El on the north, and it ended at the sea.
The sixth lot came out for the descendants of Naphtali, and their borders were from Heleph, to the oak tree in Zaanannim, stretching to the Jordan, then turned westward to Aznoth Tabor, went toward Hukkok, then reached to Zebulun on the south, reached to Asher on the west, and to Judah toward the east.
The seventh lot came out for the tribe of the descendants of Dan according to their families. And the border of their inheritance was Zorah, Eshtaol, Ir Shemesh, Shaalbin, Aijalon, Jithlah, Elon, Timnah, Ekron, Eltekeh, Gibbethon, Baalath, Jehud, Azzur, Bene Berak, Gath Rimmon, and from the sea, Jarkon and Rakkon, with the border over against Joppa. But the border of the descendants of Dan slipped out of their control, so the descendants of Dan went up and fought against Leshem, and after capturing it and striking it with the sword they took possession of it and dwelt in it, and called the town known as Leshem, Dan, after the name of their ancestor.
So each tribe had land, and they made an end of distributing the land for inheritance by its borders. But Joshua had no land, and the children of Israel honored him. They gave an inheritance among them to Joshua, allowing whichever city he asked. So Joshua got Timnath Serah in the hill country of Ephraim, and he built the city and lived there.

These are the inheritances, which Eleazar the priest, Joshua the son of Nun, and the heads of ancestral houses of the tribes of the children of Israel distributed by lot in Shiloh before the LORD, at the door of the Tent of Meeting.

CHAPTER 19

Then Joshua called the Reubenites, the Gadites, and the half-tribe of Manasseh, and said to them, "You have kept all that Moses commanded you, and have listened to my voice in all that I commanded you. You have not left your brothers these many days, but have performed the duty of the commandment of the LORD your GOD. Now the LORD your GOD has given rest to your brothers, as he spoke to them. Therefore now return and go to your tents, to the land of your possession. Only, take diligent heed to do the commandment and the law which Moses commanded you, to love the LORD your GOD, to walk in all his ways, to keep his commandments, to hold fast to him, and to serve him with all your heart and with all your soul."

So Joshua blessed them, and sent them away; and they went to their tents. He also blessed the half-tribe of Manasseh Moses that he had given inheritance to in Bashan, while to the other half gave Joshua among their brothers beyond the Jordan westward.

And the descendants of Reuben and the descendants of Gad and the half-tribe of Manasseh returned, and departed from the children of Israel out of Shiloh, which is in the land of Canaan, to go to the land of Gilead, to the land of their possession, which they owned, according to the commandment of the LORD. When they came to the region about the Jordan, that is in the land of Canaan, the descendants of Reuben and the descendants of Gad and the half-tribe of Manasseh built there an altar by the Jordan, a great altar to look at. And the children of Israel heard this, "The descendants of Reuben and the descendants of Gad and the half-tribe of Manasseh have built an altar in the forefront of the land of Canaan, in the region about the Jordan." And they were enraged by this, for they perceived that this was not an altar to the LORD but built in order to worship other gods.[333]

So when the children of Israel heard of it, the whole congregation of the children of Israel gathered themselves together at Shiloh, to go up against them to war. And the children of Israel sent to the descendants of Reuben, and to the descendants of Gad, and to the half-tribe of Manasseh, into the land of Gilead, Phinehas the son of Eleazar the priest, and with him ten princes, one prince of a fathers' house for each of the tribes of Israel. Every one of them were heads of ancestral houses among the thousands of Israel. And they came to the descendants of Reuben, and to the descendants of Gad, and to the half-tribe of Manasseh, to the land of Gilead, and they spoke with them, saying, "Why have you have committed against the GOD of Israel, to build an altar, to rebel this day against the LORD? Was the iniquity of Peor too little for us, from which we have not cleansed ourselves, although there came a plague on the congregation of the LORD, that you must turn away this day from following the LORD? If you rebel today against the LORD, tomorrow he will be angry with the whole congregation of Israel. However, if the land of your possession is unclean, then pass over to the land of the possession of the LORD, where the LORD's Tent dwells, and take possession among us. But do not rebel against the LORD, nor rebel against us, in building an altar other than the altar of the LORD our GOD. When Achan the son of Zerah committed a trespass in the devoted thing, did not wrath fall on all the congregation of Israel? That man did not perish alone in his iniquity."

Then the descendants of Reuben spoke to the heads of the thousands of Israel, "GOD, the LORD knows, and Israel will know, whether this was done in rebellion or whether we built this altar on behalf of the LORD. If indeed it was in rebellion or if in trespass against the LORD, do not save us this day, because we have built us an altar to turn away from following the LORD. But if it was to offer burnt offering or meal offering or if to offer sacrifices of peace offerings, let the LORD himself require it. For the LORD has made the Jordan a border between us and you, you descendants of Reuben and descendants of Gad. Therefore we said, 'Let's now prepare to build ourselves an altar, not for burnt offering, nor for sacrifice. But it will be a witness between us and you, and between our generations after us, that we may perform the service of the LORD before him with our burnt offerings, with our sacrifices, and with our peace offerings,' that your descendants may not tell our descendants in time to come, 'You have no portion in the LORD.' Far be it from us that we should rebel against the LORD, and turn away this

[333] There is nothing in the text that states this is so. It is an assumption on their part.

day from following the LORD, to build an altar for burnt offering, for meal offering, or for sacrifice, for any besides the LORD our GOD that is before his Tent."
When Phinehas the priest, and the leaders of the congregation, even the heads of the thousands of Israel that were with him, heard the words that the descendants of Reuben and the descendants of Gad and the descendants of Manasseh spoke, it pleased them well. Phinehas the son of Eleazar the priest said to the descendants of Reuben, to the descendants of Gad, and to the descendants of Manasseh, "Today we know that the LORD is in the midst of us, because you have not committed this trespass against the LORD. Now you have delivered the children of Israel out of the hand of the LORD."
And Phinehas and the leaders returned from the descendants of Reuben to the children of Israel, and brought them word again. The thing pleased the children of Israel, so the children of Israel blessed GOD, and spoke no more of going to war to destroy the land of Reuben. The descendants of Reuben and the descendants of Gad proclaimed regarding the altar, that it was a witness that the LORD is GOD.

CHAPTER 22

When the LORD had given rest to Israel from their enemies all around, Joshua was old. And Joshua called for all Israel, for their elders and for their heads, and said to them, "I am old and advanced in years. You have seen all that the LORD your GOD has done to all these nations because of you, for it is the LORD your GOD who has fought for you. I have allotted to you these nations that remain, to be an inheritance for your tribes, from the Jordan, with all the nations that I have cut off, to the Great Sea toward the going down of the sun. And the LORD your GOD will himself thrust the nations out from before you, and drive them out of your sight, and he will send wild animals against them until he utterly destroys them and their kings from before you. Therefore be very courageous to keep and to do all that is written in the book of the law of Moses, that you not turn aside from it to the right hand or to the left, that you not come among these nations, nor call upon of the name of their gods, neither serve them, nor bow down to them, but hold fast to the LORD your GOD, as you have done. For the LORD has driven great and strong nations out from before you. But as for you, no man has stood before you. One man of you will chase a thousand, for the LORD your GOD is who fights for you. Therefore, watch that you love the LORD your GOD. Otherwise, if you hold fast to the remnant of these nations, make marriages with them, and become like them, the LORD your GOD will no longer drive these nations from out of your sight. Rather, they will be a snare and a trap to you, a scourge in your sides, and thorns in your eyes, until you perish from off this good land which the LORD your GOD has given you."
Joshua continued, "Today I am going the way of all Earth. You know in all your hearts and in all your souls that not one thing has failed of all the good things which the LORD your GOD spoke concerning you. All have happened to you. As all the good things have come on you of which the LORD your GOD spoke to you, so the LORD will bring on you all the evil things if you disobey the covenant of the LORD your GOD to go and serve other gods."

CHAPTER 23

And Joshua said to all the people, "Your fathers lived of old time beyond the River, the father of Abraham and the father of Nahor. And they served other gods. The LORD took your father Abraham from beyond the River, and led him throughout all the land of Canaan, and multiplied his descendants, and gave him Isaac. And he gave to Isaac Jacob and Esau. And he gave to Esau Mount Seir, to possess it. And Jacob and his children went down into Egypt, and became there a great and numerous and mighty nation, and the Egyptians afflicted them. And the LORD sent Moses and Aaron and plagued Egypt, and afterwards he brought you out from Egypt. And you came to the sea, and the Egyptians pursued after your fathers with chariots and with horsemen to the Red Sea. When they cried out to the LORD, he put darkness between you and the Egyptians, and brought the sea on them, and covered them. And your eyes saw what the LORD did in Egypt, and you lived in the wilderness many days. The LORD brought you into the land of the Amorites that lived beyond the Jordan, and they fought with you. But the LORD gave them into your hand. You possessed their land, and they were destroyed before you. The king of Moab arose and fought against Israel. He sent and called Balaam the son of Beor to curse you, but the LORD would not listen to Balaam, so he blessed you still. You went over the Jordan, and came to Jericho. The men of Jericho fought against you, the Amorite, the Perizzite, the Canaanite, the Hethite, the Girgashite, the Hivite, and the Jebusite. Even so, the

LORD delivered them into your hand. The LORD gave you a land whereon you had not labored, and cities which you did not build, and you live in them. You eat of vineyards and olive groves which you did not plant. Now therefore fear the LORD, and serve him in sincerity and in truth. Put away the gods which your fathers served beyond the River and in Egypt, and serve the LORD."
The Joshua asked the people, "If it seems evil to you to serve the LORD, choose this day who you will serve, whether the gods which your fathers served that were beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD."
The people answered, "Far be it from us that we should forsake the LORD, to serve other gods, for it is the LORD our GOD who brought us and our fathers up out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage, and who did those great signs in our sight and preserved us in all the way in which we went, among all the peoples through the midst of who we passed. The LORD drove out from before us all those peoples. Therefore we also will serve the LORD; for he is our GOD."
Joshua said to the people, "You *cannot* serve the LORD; for he is a holy GOD. He is a jealous GOD. He will not forgive your disobedience nor your sins. If you forsake the LORD, and serve foreign gods, then he will turn and do you harm, even after he has done you good."
The people said to Joshua, "*No*! We will serve the LORD."
Joshua said to the people, "You are witnesses against yourselves that you have chosen you the LORD, to serve him." They said, "We are witnesses." So Joshua said, "Now therefore put away the foreign gods which are among you, and incline your heart to the LORD, the GOD of Israel." And the people said to Joshua, "We will serve the LORD our GOD, and we will listen to his voice."
So Joshua made a covenant with the people that day, and made for them a statute and an ordinance in Shechem. Joshua wrote these words in the book of the law of GOD. And he took a great stone, and set it up there under the oak that was by the sanctuary of the LORD. Joshua said to all the people, "This stone will be a witness against us, for it has heard all the words of the LORD which he spoke to us. It will be therefore a witness against you, lest you deny your GOD."
So Joshua sent the people away, every man to his inheritance. After this, Joshua died at one hundred and ten years old. They buried him in the border of his inheritance in Timnath Serah, on the north of the mountain of Gaash.
Israel served the LORD all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders who outlived Joshua, and had known all the work of the LORD, that he had worked for Israel. They buried the bones of Joseph, which the children of Israel brought up out of Egypt, in Shechem, in the parcel of ground which Jacob bought of the sons of Hamor the father of Shechem for a hundred kesitahs. They became the inheritance of the descendants of Joseph. Eleazar also died. They buried him in the hill of Phinehas his son.

SAMUEL

CHAPTER 1

In the hill country of Ephraim, there was a certain man named Elkanah. And he had two wifes: one was named Peninnah and the other was Hannah. Peninnah had children, but Hannah had no children. Every year, this man went up from his city to worship and to sacrifice to the LORD in Shiloh. And Hophni and Phinehas were priests of the LORD there, and they were sons of Eli. When Elkanah sacrificed, he gave portions to Peninnah and her sons and daughters. But Hannah got a double portion, for he loved her, even though she was barren. And rival taunted her whenever Elkanah was out of earshot, telling her, "The LORD must hate you, for he has shut up your womb." And Hannah could not answer in response because she did not understand why her womb was closed. And every year, while Elkanah prayed and sacrificed, she taunted Hannah. Then she could take no more. She sat in her room crying and she would not eat. "Why are you doing this, Hannah?" Elkanah asked, "Why do you weep? Why do you not eat? Why is your heart sad? Am I not better to you than ten sons?" But Hannah could not tell him what Peninnah was doing to her, because she loved that he was happy with Peninnah and her chidren, and could not hurt him by talking poorly about his other wife. So she rose up, ate and drank, and stood before the LORD. And muttered in a whisper a vow, saying, "LORD of hosts, if you will indeed look on my affliction and remember me to give me a son, then I will set him before you as a Nazirite until the day of his death. And he will not drink wine or strong drink, and no razor will come on his head." And she repeated this prayer again and again, and wept loudly

because her heart was in a dark place.
Now, Eli the priest was sitting on the seat by the doorpost of the temple of the LORD. And he saw what looked like mumbling to herself and her crying and carrying on, and she thought she was drunk but smelled no liquor, then next he thought her crazy or possessed by a demon, for her mouth moved constantly, but her voice was not heard. So he said to her, "Woman, what madness has taken you? Or what demon has possessed you?" But noticed that she was able to hear her voice, and looked at him a puzzled way, he brought water, wondering again if she was drunk. So Eli said to her, "Are you drunk then? Drink this and be sober. "
Hannah answered, "I am not drunk! I am a woman of a sorrowful spirit, and I poured out myself before the LORD. Do not call me a worthless woman, for I have been speaking out of the abundance of my distress and my anguish." Then Eli answered, "If this is so, let the GOD of Israel grant your petition that you have asked of him." So Hannah went her way, entered her quarters, and ate. Then her facial expression wasn't sad any more. The next day, she rose up in the morning early with Elkanah and worshiped before the LORD, and she returned. And Hannah made love to Elkanah her husband. And the LORD remembered her affliction.
Hannah conceived, and bore a son. And she named him Samuel, saying, "Because I have asked him of the LORD, and the LORD has listened. So also will my son listen to the word of the LORD."
The man Elkanah, and all his house, went up to offer to the LORD the yearly sacrifice, and to redeem his vow and all the tithes of his land. But Hannah did not go up, for she said to her husband, "Not until the child is weaned, then I will bring him, that he may appear before the LORD, and stay there forever. For I am promised my son as a Nazirite."
And Elkanah her husband said to her, "Do what seems good in your eyes. Wait until you have weaned him, then may the LORD also establish what you have said." So the woman waited and nursed her son, until she weaned him. And she went up with him to Shiloh with a three-year old bull, and bread, and one ephah of flour, and a skin of wine, and brought him to the house of the LORD in Shiloh. And the child was with them. And they went before the LORD, and his father slaughtered the sacrifice, which he did annually to the LORD. And he brought the child, and he slaughtered the bull. And Hannah, the mother of the child, brought him to Eli.
She said, "Oh, my lord, as you live, my lord, I am the woman who stood by you here, praying to the LORD. For this child I prayed, and the LORD has given me my petition which I asked of her. Therefore also I have given him to the LORD. As long as he lives he is the LORD's." She worshiped the LORD there.

CHAPTER 2

Hannah prayed, "My heart exults in the LORD. My horn is exalted in my GOD. My mouth is enlarged over my enemies, because I rejoice in your salvation. Truly, there is no one as holy as the LORD. Truly, there is no one besides her, nor is there any rock like our GOD. Do not let arrogance come out of your mouth, for the LORD is a GOD of knowledge. By her actions are weighed, and she breaks the bows of the mighty men. As for those who stumbled, she arms them with strength. She makes those who were full hire themselves out for bread. She gives those who were hungry enough to satisfy. Even the barren has borne seven, and she who has many children has her womb closed. The LORD kills and makes alive, she brings down to Sheol and brings up. The LORD makes poor, and makes rich. She brings low, she also lifts up. She raises up the poor out of the dust. She lifts up the needy from the dunghill to make them sit with princes and inherit the throne of glory. For the pillars of Earth are the LORD's. She has set the world on them. She will guard the feet of her faithful ones, but the wicked she will put to silence to in darkness. For no man will prevail by strength. The LORD will shatter her adversaries. She will thunder against them in the sky. The LORD will judge the farthest corners of Earth. She will give strength to her king, and exalt the horn of her anointed."
Elkanah went to his house, and Samuel was brought before Eli the priest. Now Eli was a righteous man but he was soft on his children. So the sons of Eli were base men, who did not know the LORD. The custom of the priests with the people was that when any man offered sacrifice, the priest's servant came, while the flesh was boiling, with a fork of three teeth in his hand, he struck it into the pan, and all that the fork brought up the priest took therewith. So they did in Shiloh to all the Israelites who came there. The fat was burnt to sacrifice to the LORD. But his sons came and told the man who

sacrificed, "Give meat to roast for the priest, for we will not accept boiled meat from you, but raw." And if the man said to him, "Let the fat be burned first, and then take all of it which you desire," they would say, "You will give it to me now, or I will take it by force." And this was an affront to the LORD. They despised the offering of the LORD, and used their position to exploit offerings for themselves.
In contrast to these sons, Samuel was righteous before the LORD while he was yet a child, and wore a linen ephod. And his mother made him a new robe, and every year she brought one to him when she her husband came up to offer the yearly sacrifice. And Eli would bless Elkanah and his wife, and said, "May the LORD repay you with offspring by this woman for the gift which she made to the LORD." And the man returned to his home. The LORD blessed Hannah, and she bore more children, three sons and two daughters. The child Samuel grew before the LORD.
Now Eli was very old; and he heard what his sons did to the children of Israel (and how they also lay with the women who served at the door of the Tent of Meeting). And he said to them, "Why do you do such things as these that I hear being said of you from the mouth of the people of the LORD? No, my sons, do not do this. For it is not a good report that I hear the people of the LORD spreading. If one man sins against another, he will appeal to the LORD; but if a man sins against the LORD, who will entreat for him?" But, they did not listen to the voice of their father, because the LORD intended to kill them. They disrespected their father, and did not hear his word.
The LORD came to Eli as a man, and said, "I plainly revealed myself to the house of your father, when they were slaves in Egypt to the house of Pharaoh. And I chose him out of all the tribes of Israel to be my priest, to go up to my altar, to burn incense, to wear an ephod before me. And I gave to the house of your father all the offerings by fire of the children of Israel as food. Why do your children[334] look down on my sacrifice and on my offering, which I have commanded for my dwelling place, and make themselves fat with the best of all the offerings of Israel my people? I said that your house, and the house of your father, should walk before me forever. But now I says, 'Be it far from me, for those who honor me I will honor, and those who despise me will be lightly esteemed. The days come, that I will cut off your descendants, and the descendants of your father's house, that there will not be an old man in your house. And you will see distress in the dwelling place, in all that he does good with Israel. And there will not be an old man in your house all the days. And the man of yours I do not cut off from my altar will be to cause his eyes to fail and to grieve his soul, and all the increase of your house will die by the sword of men.' This will be the sign to you, that will come on your two sons, on Hophni and Phinehas, in one day they will both die. I will raise me up a faithful priest, that will do according to that which is in my heart and in my mind. I will build him a sure house, and he will walk before my anointed forever. Everyone who is left in your house will come and bow down to him for a piece of silver and a loaf of bread."

CHAPTER 3

The child Samuel was righteous to the LORD before Eli. Now, the word of the LORD was rare in those days; there was no frequent vision. One night, Eli was old and blind, Eli and Samuel were lying down for the night in the LORD's temple where the ark of GOD was, and the lamp of GOD hadn't yet gone out. Then the LORD called, "*Samuel, Samuel...*" And he ran to Eli, and said, "Here I am." But he said, "I did not call. Lie down again." He went and lay down. Then the LORD called again, "*Samuel, Samuel...*" And he arose and went to Eli, and said, "Here I am. For you called me." He answered, "I did not call, my son. Lie down again." Now Samuel did not yet know the LORD, neither had the LORD yet spoken to him. The LORD called Samuel again the third time. He arose and went to Eli, and said the same. Then Eli perceived that the LORD had called the child. So Eli said to Samuel, "Lie down again. If he calls you, tell him, 'Speak, LORD, for I hear you.'" So Samuel went and lay down in his place.
The LORD came and called as at other times. Then Samuel said, "Speak, LORD, for I hear you."[335]
The LORD said to Samuel, "I will do a thing in Israel, at which both the ears of everyone who hears it will tingle. In that day I will perform against Eli's children[336] all that I have spoken to Eli concerning

---

[334] Originally it was "why do you..." but it is clearly the sons who are at fault. He told them not to do this.
[335] This is a name that is fulfilled in its meaning. Samuel (or Samantha) mean "Listen, the word of the LORD."
[336] Again, Eli actually did condemn them. He just wasn't strong enough to change their minds. So I shifted the blame to the sons, not to Eli. Like my older brother, he was too soft on them. I don't blame my brother for his kids being little shits. They

his house. For I have told him that I will judge his house forever, for the iniquity which he knew but did not stop, because his sons were cursing GOD and he did not restrain them. So Eli's sons will be condemned. And no amount of sacrifice will forgive their sins, for indeed the sacrifices are the source of their sin."
And Samuel lay there until the morning, and in the morning he got up and opened the doors of the house of the LORD. And Samuel was afraid to tell Eli the vision. But Eli could see his anguish, and he called called Samuel, "Samuel, my son." Samuel said, "Here I am." Eli said, "What is the thing that the LORD has spoken to you? Please do not hide it from me. For GOD may do so to you, if you hide anything from me of all the things that he spoke to you." So Samuel told him everything. And he said, "It is the LORD, and he is good. Let him do what seems good to him." Samuel grew, and the LORD was with him, and Samuel let none of his words fall to the ground. And everywhere knew that Samuel was established to be a prophet of the LORD.

CHAPTER 4

And Samuel's words came to all Israel. And Eli grew very old, and his sons Hophni and Phinehas kept advancing in their wicked behavior before the LORD. And in those days the Philistines gathered themselves together against Israel. And Israel went out to meet them in battle, and camped beside Ebenezer, and the Philistines camped in Aphek. Israel was struck before the Philistines, and they killed about four thousand men of the army. When the people had come into the camp, the elders of Israel said, "Why has the LORD struck us today before the Philistines? Let us get the ark of the covenant of the LORD out of Shiloh to us, that it may come among us, and save us out of the hand of our enemies."
So the people went to Shiloh and they brought from there the ark of the covenant of the LORD. And the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were there with the ark of the covenant of GOD. When the ark of the covenant of the LORD came into the camp, all Israel shouted with a great shout, so that Earth rang again. When the Philistines heard the noise of the shout, they said, "What does the noise of this great shout in the camp of the Hebrews mean?" And they were told that the ark of the LORD had come into the camp.
The Philistines were afraid, for they said, "Their LORD has come into the camp." They said, "Woe to us. For there has not been such a thing before. Woe to us. Who will deliver us out of their hand? These are those that struck the Egyptians with all kinds of plagues in the wilderness. Be strong, and behave like men, O you Philistines, that you not be servants to the Hebrews. Strengthen yourselves like men, and fight." So they fought, and Israel was defeated, and they fled every man to his tent. And there was a very great slaughter, for there fell of Israel thirty thousand footmen. The ark of GOD was taken, and the Hophni and Phinehas were slain for their sins.
After this, a man of Benjamin out of the army with his clothes torn and dirt on his head, and he ran with this news to Shiloh. And Eli was at this point ninety-nine years of age and could no longer see, but he heard the noise of all the crying, and asked them to explain what had happened. And they told of the loss of Israel in battle, the loss of the ark, and the loss of his sons. Now before he even spoke of his sons, at the mention of the ark of the covenant, he fell backward and died. And Phinehas's wife was pregnant, and when she heard the news (including that of the dead of her father and husband), she went into labor. And she died not long after giving birth to a son. He midwife tried to calm her, saying, "Do not be afraid.[337] You have born a son." But she did not hear, and would not be calmed. She named the child before she died, Ichabod, for "The glory has departed from Israel," because the ark of GOD was taken, and because of her father-in-law and her husband.

CHAPTER 5

As for the Philistines, while they had won the victory, the ark of the covenant was a curse to them. They had taken the ark of GOD, and they brought it from Ebenezer to Ashdod. And they brought it into the house of Dagon, and set it next to an idol of Dagon. On the next day, Dagon had fallen on his face before the ark of the LORD. So they raised up Dagon and set him in his place again. When they arose the morning after that, Dagon had fallen on his face before the ark of the LORD. And this time,

---

are little shits because they heedlessly refuse to learn restraint whether anyone tells them to stop.
[337] GOD always tells us not to be afraid, and I believe GOD speaks through people using the Holy Spirit, the *Ruach ha Kodesh*.

the head of Dagon and both the palms of his hands were cut off on the threshold. Only Dagon's torso was intact.
Therefore neither the priests of Dagon, nor any who come into Dagon's house, step on the threshold of Dagon in Ashdod. For they consider the area cursed to them. But their suffering was to continue. The LORD ravaged them and afflicted them with tumors. And he brought up against them mice, and they burst out in their ships, and mice sprang up in the midst of their land, and there was a great terror of death in the city. Their food was eaten, and they began to have plagues from the mice, so many were snatched by death because they starved, and still more died because of a terrible plague.[338] And this would happen again in Europe, for GOD would punish the people for harming his priests and the children of Israel.[339]
When the men saw what was happening, they said, "The ark of the GOD of Israel will not stay with us; for his hand is severe on us, and on Dagon our god." So they gathered the Philistines together, and said, "What will we do with the ark of the GOD of Israel?" Then the people of Gath answered, "Let the ark of the GOD of Israel be carried over to us." So they brought the ark of GOD to Gath. But tumors broke out on them as soon as the ark was moved. So it was moved to Ekron, but each town that received it was cursed by illness, and the people of each began to say, "Why have you brought about the ark of the GOD of Israel to us, to kill us and our people?"
The Philistines said, "Send away the ark of the GOD of Israel, and let it go again to its own place, so that it will not kill us and our people." For there was a very heavy terror of death throughout all the city when the ark of GOD arrived there.

CHAPTER 6

The ark of the LORD was in the country of the Philistines seven months. The Philistines called for the priests, and for the diviners, and for the magicians, saying, "Tell us how we should send it to its place." And they said, "If you are going to send away the ark of the GOD of Israel, do not send it empty. But return to him a reparation, then you will be healed and reconciled. Will not, then, his hand be removed from you?"
Then they asked, "What will be the trespass offering which we will return be?" And the diviners said, "Pour gold and make five golden tumors and five golden mice, for the number of the lords of the Philistines. This plague was on you all, and on your lords. Therefore you will make images of your tumors, and images of your mice that ravage the land, and you will give glory to the GOD of Israel, that perhaps he will lighten his hand from off you, and from off your land. Remember the Egyptians, and how Pharaoh hardened his heart? When he had worked wonderfully among them, did they not let the people go, and they departed? So go and prepare yourselves a new cart, and place two milk cows on which there has come no yoke. Then tie the cows to the cart, and bring their calves home from them, and take the ark of the LORD and lay it on the cart, and put the figures of gold with the ark, which you return him for a trespass offering, in a box by its side; and send it away, that it may go. And watch where it goes. If it goes up by the way of its own territory to Beth Shemesh, then he has done us this great evil. Otherwise, we will know that it is not his hand that struck us, but simply chance that happened to us."
So they did so, and indeed the cows pulling the ark went straight to Beth Shemesh, mooing as they went along the highway, and did not turn aside to the right hand or to the left. And the lords of the Philistines followed them. And those of Beth Shemesh were reaping their wheat harvest in the valley, and they lifted up their eyes and saw the ark, and rejoiced to see it.
The cart came into the field of Joshua of Beth Shemesh, and stood where there was a great stone. And they split the wood of the cart, and offered up the cows for a burnt offering to the LORD. The Levites took down the ark of the LORD, and the chest that was with it, in which the articles of gold were, and put them on the great stone. And the men of Beth Shemesh offered burnt offerings and sacrificed

---

[338] More than likely, the bubonic plague that wiped out much of Europe.
[339] This is *really* bizarre logic. Basically, there are a lot of theories about the Black Death, whether climate change, rats winding up on boats, people not cleaning poop from the streets, or diseased bodies being used in a war against Mongolia. But this basically has GOD punishing people for a sin that they were *going* to do. The pogroms against the Jews only happened because people blamed the Jewish people for the plague. So basically, "I know you are going to kill Jews because of the plague, so suffer this plague!"

sacrifices the same day to the LORD. When the five lords of the Philistines had seen it, they returned to Ekron the same day. And they said, "Surely the LORD has done this to our people."
These are the golden tumors which the Philistines returned for a trespass offering to the LORD: for Ashdod one, for Gaza one, for Ashkelon one, for Gath one, for Ekron one. Likewise the golden mice, according to the number of all the cities of the Philistines belonging to the five lords were offered to the place of the great stone whereon they set down the ark of the LORD. That stone remains in the field of Joshua of Beth Shemesh. And they opened the ark of the covenant to have it consecrated with these sacrifices, because it had been in the hands of their enemies. And the people knelt in worship while it was consecrated.
But some of the people of Beth Shemesh did not kneel and worship, but instead gazed at the ark of the LORD as it was opened. So the LORD struck seventy men of them, and they melted and burned to cinders.[340] The people mourned, because the LORD had struck the people down in a frightening manner.
And the men of Beth Shemesh said, "Who is able to stand before this holy thing? And to who should he go up from us?" They sent messengers to the inhabitants of Kiriath Jearim, saying, "The Philistines have brought back the ark of the LORD. Come down, and bring it up to yourselves."

CHAPTER 7

The men of Kiriath Jearim came and took up the ark of the LORD and brought it into the house of Abinadab, which was on the hill, and sanctified Eleazar his son to keep the ark of the LORD. It happened, from the day that the ark stayed in Kiriath Jearim, that the time was long (for it was twenty years) and all the house of Israel lamented after the LORD.
So Samuel spoke to all the house of Israel, saying, "If you do return to the LORD with all your heart, then put away the foreign gods of Baal and Ishtar from among you, and direct your hearts to the LORD and serve him only, he will deliver you out of the hand of the Philistines."
Then the children of Israel removed Baal and Ishtar, and served the LORD only.
Samuel said, "Gather all Israel to Mizpah, and I will pray for you to the LORD." They gathered together to Mizpah, and drew water, and poured it out before the LORD, and fasted on that day, and said there, "We have sinned against the LORD." Samuel judged the children of Israel in Mizpah.
When the Philistines heard that the children of Israel were gathered together at Mizpah, the lords of the Philistines went up against Israel. When the children of Israel heard it, they were afraid of the Philistines. The children of Israel said to Samuel, "Do not cease to cry to the LORD your GOD for us, that he will save us out of the hand of the Philistines." Samuel took a suckling lamb, and offered it for a whole burnt offering to the LORD. And Samuel cried to the LORD for Israel, and the LORD answered him. As Samuel was offering up the burnt offering, the Philistines drew near to battle against Israel. But the LORD caused a great thunder on that day on the Philistines and confused them, and they were struck down before Israel.
The men of Israel went out of Mizpah, and pursued the Philistines, and struck them, as far as below Beth Kar. Then Samuel took a stone, and set it between Mizpah and Jashan, and called its name Ebenezer, saying, "The LORD helped us until now." So the Philistines were subdued, and they came no more within the territory of Israel. The hand of the LORD was against the Philistines all the days of Samuel. The cities which the Philistines had taken from Israel were restored to Israel, from Ekron to Gath, and Israel recovered its territory out of the hand of the Philistines. There was peace between Israel and the Amorites.
Samuel judged Israel all the days of his life. He went from year to year in circuit, and he judged Israel in all those places. His return was to Ramah, for there was his house. And there he judged Israel, and he built there an altar to the LORD.

CHAPTER 8

It happened, when Samuel was old, that he made his sons judges over Israel. But as with Eli, so also with Samuel, his sons did not follow him example. Joel and Abijah his sons took bribes and perverted justice.
So the people of Israel gathered and asked Samuel, "You are old, and your sons do not walk in your

[340] Okay, maybe I took my inspiration from *Raiders of the Lost Ark*. Just a bit.

ways. If there are no judges to be after you, instead make us a king to judge us like all the nations."
But this displeased Samuel, when they said, "Give us a king to judge us." So Samuel prayed to the LORD.
The LORD said to Samuel, "I will allow it. They have not rejected you, but they have rejected me, that I should not be king over them. Since the day that I brought them up out of Egypt, they have forsaken me and served other gods. Now therefore listen to their voice, and you will protest solemnly to them and tell them the way of the king who will reign over them."
Samuel told all the words of the LORD to the people who asked of him a king. He said, "This will be the way of the king who will reign over you: he will take your sons, and appoint them horsemen for his chariots, and they will run before his chariots.[341] And he will appoint for himself commanders of thousands, and commanders of fifties; and he will assign some to plow his ground, and to reap his harvest, and gather his vintage, and to make his implements of war, and the equipment of his chariots. He will take your daughters to be perfumers, and to be cooks, and to be bakers. And some he will make his wives, or servants to dance for his pleasure.[342] He will take the tenth of your seed and of your vineyards and olive groves, and give them to his officers and to his servants. He will take your men and women. He will take your best cattle and your donkeys, and put them to his work. He will take the tenth of your flocks. You will cry out in that day because of your king who you will have chosen for yourselves, and the LORD will not answer you in that day."
But the people refused to listen to the voice of Samuel and they said, "No! We will have a king over us, that we also may be like all the nations,[343] and that our king may judge us, and go out before us, and fight our battles." Samuel heard all the words of the people, and he rehearsed them in the ears of the LORD. The LORD said to Samuel, "Listen to their voice, and make them a king."

CHAPTER 9

Samuel said to the men of Israel, "Every man go to his city. I will go to each place and pick a king." And he visited each place, but in each case, he did not find a suitable king.
Now there was a man of Benjamin, whose name was Kish, the son of Abiel, the son of Zeror, the son of Becorath, the son of Aphiah, the son of a Benjamite, a mighty man of valor. He had a son, whose name was Saul, an impressive young man, and there was not among the children of Israel a better person than he. From his shoulders and upward he was higher than any of the people. Now the donkeys of Kish, Saul's father, were lost. And Kish said to Saul his son, "Take now one of the servants with you, and arise, go and look for the donkeys." So Saul got up and took one of the servants of his father with him and went to look for the donkeys of his father Kish. Saul passed with the servant through the hill country of Ephraim and passed through the land of Shalishah, but they did not find them. Then they passed through the land of Shaalim, but they weren't there. Then they passed through the land of the Jaminites, but they did not find them. When they had come to the land of Zuph, Saul said to his servant who was with him, "Come, and let us return, lest my father stop caring about the donkeys, and be anxious for us." But the servant said to him, "See now, there is in this city a man of GOD, and he is a man who is held in honor. All that he says surely comes to pass. Now let us go there. Perhaps he can tell us concerning our journey on which we have set out."
Then Saul said to his servant, "But if we go, what will we bring the man? For the bread is gone in our vessels, and there is no gift to bring to the man of GOD. What do we have?" The servant answered Saul again, and said, "I have in my hand the fourth part of a shekel of silver. I will give that to the man of GOD, to tell us our way." For in earlier times in Israel, when a man went to inquire of GOD, he would say, "Come, and let us go to the seer." So it was that the servant expected the prophet to find his donkeys. Saul praised the man, and the two went to the city where the man of GOD was.
So they went out to the city, and there they found young women drawing water. They asked, "Is the

---

[341] The Jews think of their Messiah in terms of a monarch. But GOD is clearly not interested in lording over others, as JESUS mentions in Matthew. GOD allows us choices, and that includes choosing to elect an oppressor. This draws a parallel back to Nimrod, tyranny as a means of separating from GOD's perfect rule.
[342] This sentence is an addition, but it's basically true. A king could demand a wife that might even be betrothed to someone else, or slaves for his pleasure.
[343] The LORD blesses them and sets them aside as a chosen people, but ultimately what they want instead is to be like the sinful nations that have nothing to do with the LORD.

prophet here?" They pointed, "He is just up ahead of you. You had best hurry, for he has come to this city today only to sacrifice in the high place. He goes to sacrifice and to eat, and the people will eat after he blesses the sacrifice."
As Saul and his servant came within the city, Samuel met them on the way up to the high place. Now the LORD had revealed to Samuel before Saul came, "Tomorrow about this time I will send you a man out of the land of Benjamin, and you will anoint him to be prince over my people Israel, and he will save my people out of the hand of the Philistines; for I have seen the suffering of my people, because their cry has come to me." But Saul did not know it was Samuel[344] nor did he know that the LORD had told Samuel to choose him as king. So Saul asked Samuel, who he thought was nothing more than an old man, "Excuse me, am I going the right way? I have heard that there is a prophet and seer, and I have come to ask about the location of my donkeys." And Samuel told him to stay for the sacrifice, and the dinner to follow, for he would be sure to arrange that this question would be addressed to the prophet before the night was over. So they made it up the hill, and Samuel told him to sit with the crowd, while he went to go find the prophet. Now Saul thought it strange that the old man knew the prophet enough to go find him, but not as strange as when he saw Samuel bless and sacrifice the food. Samuel took Saul and his servant, and brought them into the guest room, and made them sit in the best place among those who were invited, who were about thirty persons. And Samuel said to the cook, "Bring the portion which I gave you, of which I told you to set aside." The cook took up the thigh, and that which was on it, and set it before Saul. And he said, "That which has been reserved. Set it before yourself and eat. This is the appointed time." So Saul ate with Samuel that day. It was then that Saul realized the old man might possibly be the prophet Samuel. And after the sacrifice, Samuel pointed to Saul, "This is the man of who I spoke to you. This one will have authority over my people as king."
Then he spoke to Saul, "As for your donkeys who were lost three days ago, do not set your mind on them. They have been found already. And for who does all Israel desire? Is it not for you, and for all your father's house? Will you not be king of all Israel?" But Saul protested, "Am I not of Benjamin, of the smallest of the tribes of Israel? And my family the least of all the families of the tribe of Benjamin? Why then do you speak to me like this?" But Samuel prepared a bed for Saul on the roof, telling him, "Tell the servant that he should pass on before us and cross over. But you remain here awhile, that I may make known to you the word of GOD." So Saul slept. About daybreak, Samuel called to Saul on the roof. So Saul arose, and they went outside.

CHAPTER 10

Then Samuel opened a bottle of oil and anointed him with it, then kissed him, "The LORD anoints you to be ruler over his people Israel? And you will rule over the people of the LORD, and you will save them out of the hand of their enemies all around. And this will be the sign to you that the LORD has anointed you to be ruler over his inheritance. When you have departed from me today, then you will find two men by Rachel's tomb, in the territory of Benjamin at Zelzah. And they will tell you that the donkeys have been found, and that your father now cares about your whereabouts."
Samuel continued, "Meet with your father and explain to him all that has happened. Then go forward from there, and you will find the oak of Tabor, and there will be three men will meet you there going up to GOD to Bethel: one carrying three young goats, another carrying three loaves of bread, and the third carrying a bottle of wine. They will greet you and give you two wave offerings of bread, which you will accept from their hand. After that you will come to Gibeath Elohim, where the Philistine garrison is. And when you have come there to the city, you will meet a band of prophets coming down from the high place carrying a psaltery, a tambourine, a pipe, and a harp before them. And they will prophesy, and then the *Ruach ha Kodesh* will come mightily on you, and you will prophesy with them. Let it be when these signs have come to you, that you do as occasion will serve you, for GOD is with you. You will go down before me to Gilgal, and I will come down to you to offer burnt offerings, and to sacrifice peace offerings. You will wait seven days, until I come to you, and show you what you will do." And when he left Samuel, all these signs happened that day.

---

[344] Originally the text has him reveal himself immediately, but this works poorly in terms of flow. So I changed it, and I'm mentioning the change.

And all who knew him before saw that he prophesied with the prophets, then the people said one to another, "What is this that has come to the son of Kish? Is Saul also among the prophets?" When he had made an end of prophesying, he came to the high place.
Saul's uncle said to him and to his servant, "Where did you go?" He said, "To seek the donkeys. When we saw that they were not found, we came to Samuel." Saul's uncle said, "Please tell me what Samuel said to you." Saul said to his uncle, "He told us plainly that the donkeys were found." But concerning the matter of the kingdom, of which Samuel spoke, he did not tell him.
Later, Samuel called the people together to the LORD at Mizpah, and he said to the children of Israel, "The LORD brought up Israel out of Egypt, and delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians, and out of the hand of all the kingdoms that oppressed you. But you have this day rejected your GOD, who himself saves you out of all your calamities and your distresses, and you have said, 'Set a king over us.' Now therefore present yourselves before the LORD by your tribes, and by your thousands. And he will choose your king."
So Samuel brought all the tribes of Israel near, and the tribe of Benjamin was taken. He brought the tribe of Benjamin near by their families, and the family of the Matrites was taken. And he brought the family of the Matrites near man by man, and Saul the son of Kish was taken. But when they looked for him, he could not be found.
"But where *is* our king?" they asked. And they became restless. Therefore they asked of the LORD further, "Where is the king we were promised?" The LORD answered, "He has hidden himself among the baggage." And a light shone on his position. So they stood him among the people, he was taller than any of the people around him. Samuel said to all the people, "You see him who the LORD has chosen, that there is none like him among all the people?" All the people shouted, and said, "Let the king rule over us." Then Samuel told the people the regulations of the kingdom, and wrote it on a scroll, and laid it up before the LORD. After this, Samuel sent all the people away to their homes. Saul also went to his house to Gibeah, but several men whose hearts the LORD had touched followed him to his home. But the land was not united, and not everyone believed in Saul. Some said, "How will this man save us?" So they despised him, and brought him no present as tribute. And the LORD caused war, so that the nation would be united against an enemy.

CHAPTER 11

Nahash, king of the Ammonites, was severely oppressing the Gadites and the Reubenites. He put out the right eye of all of them, and he would not allow anyone to rescue Israel. Not one was left of the children of Israel beyond the Jordan whose right eye Nahash, king of the Ammonites, did not put out, except for seven thousand men who had escaped from the Ammonites and went to Jabesh Gilead.
After about a month, Nahash the Ammonite came up and camped against Jabesh Gilead, and all the men of Jabesh said to Nahash, "Make a covenant with us, and we will serve you." And Nahash the Ammonite said to them, "On this condition I will make a covenant with you, that all your right eyes are put out; and I will make it a disgrace on all Israel." The elders of Jabesh, had seen how the Gadites and Reubenites looked, so they said, "Give us seven days, that we may send messengers to all the borders of Israel. If there is no one to save us, we will come out to you and do as you say."
Then the messengers came to deliver a message to Saul, and spoke these words in the ears of the people. And all the people lifted up their voice, and wept. But Saul was instead following oxen out of the field, and did not hear the message. When Saul saw the people weeping, he asked, "What ails the people that they weep?" They told him the words of the men of Jabesh.
At these words, the *Ruach ha Kodesh* came upon Saul, and he was filled with the LORD's wrath. So he took a yoke of oxen, and cut them in pieces, and sent them throughout all the borders of Israel by the hand of messengers, saying, "Whoever doesn't come forth after Saul and after Samuel, so will it be done to his oxen." The dread of the LORD fell on the people, and they came out as one people. And the children of Israel were three hundred thousand, while the men of Judah thirty thousand. And he said to the messengers, "You will tell the men of Jabesh Gilead that by tomorrow, when the sun is hot, they will be delivered." The messengers came and told the men of Jabesh, and they were glad.
On the next day, Saul put the people in three companies. And they came into the midst of the camp in the morning watch, and struck the Ammonites until the heat of the day. Those who remained were scattered, so that no two of them were left together. And the people said to Samuel, "Who is it that

said Saul should not reign over us? Bring those men so we may put them to death." But Saul said, "Not one man will be put to death this day. For today, the LORD has worked deliverance in Israel. Come, and let us go to Gilgal, and renew the kingdom there." So all the people went to Gilgal, and there they made Saul king before the LORD in Gilgal. They offered sacrifices of peace offerings before the LORD, and Saul and all the men of Israel rejoiced greatly.

CHAPTER 12

But later, the people began to speak ill of Samuel, despite all that he had done.[345] So Samuel said to all Israel, "I have listened to your voice in all that you said to me, and have made a king over you. Now, the king walks before you, and I am old and gray-headed and my sons are with you. I have walked before you from my youth. Here I am. Testify against me before the LORD, and before his anointed. Whose ox have I taken, or whose donkey have I taken, or who have I defrauded? Who have I oppressed, or from whose hand have I taken a bribe, or stolen a shoe? Testify against me, and I will restore it to you."

They said, "You have not defrauded us, nor oppressed us, neither have you taken anything of any man's hand."

Samuel said to them, "The LORD is witness against you, and his anointed is witness this day, that you have not found anything in my hand." They said to Samuel, "He is witness." Samuel said to the people, "It is the LORD who appointed Moses and Aaron, and that brought your fathers up out of the land of Egypt. Now therefore stand still, that I may plead with you before the LORD and will recount for you all the righteous acts of the LORD, which he did to you and to your fathers. When Jacob went into Egypt, and the Egyptians oppressed them, and your fathers cried to the LORD, then the LORD sent Moses and Aaron, who brought your fathers out of Egypt, and made them to dwell in this place. But they forgot the LORD their GOD. So he sold them into the into the hand of the Philistines and into the hand of the king of Moab, and they fought against them. And they cried to the LORD, saying, 'We have sinned, because we have forsaken the LORD, and have served Baal and Ishtar. But now deliver us out of the hand of our enemies, and we will serve you.' The LORD sent Gideon, Barak, Jephthah, and Samuel. He delivered you out of the hand of your enemies on every side. You lived in safety. Then Nahash the king of the people of Ammon came against you, you said to me, 'Let us have a king that will reign over us,' even though the LORD your GOD was your king. And you will see this king who you have chosen, and who the LORD has set a king over you. You will judge for yourself his worthiness, and the LORD in turn will just you through him. If you will fear the LORD and serve him, if you listen to his voice and do not rebel against the commandment of the LORD, if you and the king who reigns over you are followers of the LORD your GOD, then he will rescue you. But if you will not listen to the voice of the LORD, but rebel against the commandment of the LORD, then the hand of the LORD will be against you, and against your king to destroy you."

Now Samuel looked around at a nearby field, "Stand still and see this great thing, which the LORD will do before your eyes. Isn't it wheat harvest today? I will call to the LORD, that he may send thunder and rain, and it will spoil the harvest. By this, you will know and see that your wickedness is great, which you have done in the sight of the LORD, in asking for a king." And Samuel called to the LORD, and thunder and rain covered the land that day. So all the people greatly feared the LORD and Samuel. Then all the people said to Samuel, "Pray to the LORD your GOD, that we not die. In addition to our other sins, we dared to ask for a king instead of GOD."

Samuel said to the people, "Do not be afraid. It is true that you have indeed done all this evil. But you should not, in your shame, turn aside from following the LORD. Serve the LORD with all your heart. Don't turn aside after vain things which can't profit nor deliver. For the LORD will not forsake his people, because it has pleased the LORD to make you a people to himself. As for me, far be it from me that I should sin against the LORD in ceasing to pray for you. I will instruct you in the good and the right way. Only fear the LORD, and serve him in truth with all your heart. For you should consider what great things he has done for you. But if you will still do wickedly, you will be swept away, both you and your king."

---

[345] There seems to be a passage missing here. He makes this speech and it is clear that something happened between them rejoicing and that speech. So I added a transition.

CHAPTER 13

Saul was around thirty or forty years old when he began to reign, and he reigned forty years over Israel. But while the people had repented earlier to Samuel, their king didn't necessarily follow the same path.

Saul chose three thousand men of Israel, and the rest of the people he sent to their tents. And he marched against the Philistines, taking Jonathan with him. Jonathan struck the garrison of the Philistines that was in Geba, and the Philistines heard of it. Saul blew the trumpet throughout all the land, saying, "Let the Hebrews hear." All Israel heard that Saul had struck the garrison of the Philistines, and the people were gathered together after Saul to Gilgal. The Philistines assembled themselves together to fight with Israel, bringing against Israel three thousand chariots, six thousand horsemen, and people as many as the sand which is on the seashore against them. They camped in Michmash, eastward of Beth Aven. When the men of Israel saw that they were in a dire situation, the people hid themselves in caves, in thickets, in rocks, and in pits.

Now some of the Hebrews had gone over the Jordan to the land of Gad and Gilead. But as for Saul, he was yet in Gilgal, and all the people followed him were trembling. And Saul wanted Samuel to come and ask the LORD for assistance, and he stayed seven days waiting for his arrival. And he waited with an animal for sacrifice. But Samuel did not come to Gilgal, and the people began to abandon him. So Saul had enough of waiting for Samuel and for the LORD.

Saul said, "Bring here the burnt offering to me, and the peace offerings." He offered the burnt offering himself, though he was not ordained as a prophet nor priest. And Saul finished burning the offering just as Samuel came. And Saul went out to greet him.

Samuel said, "What have you done? Are you the LORD's prophet?!? Surely you have overstepped."

Saul said to this, "I saw that the people were scattered from me. And I hoped for you to come and ask the LORD for help. But you did not come within the days appointed, and the Philistines assembled themselves together at Michmash. So I offered the burnt offering."

Samuel said to Saul, "You have done foolishly. You have not kept the commandment of the LORD your GOD, which would have established your kingdom on Israel forever. Your kingdom will decline from now on. The LORD has sought for himself a man after his own heart, and the LORD has appointed him prince over his people, because you have not kept that which the LORD commanded you."

And Samuel arose and departed from Gilgal, and the rest of the people went up after Saul to meet him after the men of war, when they had come up from Gilgal to Gibeah of Benjamin. And Saul numbered the people who were present with him, about six hundred men. Saul and Jonathan his son, along with the people who were present with them, stayed in Geba of Benjamin. But the Philistines camped in Michmash. The spoilers came out of the camp of the Philistines in three companies: one company turned to the way that leads to Ophrah, another company turned the way to Beth Horon, and another company turned the way of the border that looks down on the valley of Zeboim toward the wilderness.

Now there was no smith found throughout all the land of Israel; for the Philistines had said, "Lest the Hebrews make them swords or spears." But all Israel would go down to the Philistines, each to sharpen his plowshare, mattock, axe, and sickle, and the charge was two-thirds of a shekel for the plowshares and for the mattocks, and three shekels for picks and axes and to set the goads. So it came to pass in the day of battle, that there was neither sword nor spear found in the hand of any of the people who were with Saul and Jonathan, even though Saul and his son Jonathan had them.

CHAPTER 14

The LORD was indeed angry with Saul, but Saul had hopes that GOD was nonetheless capable of forgiving his transgression. So Saul tried to obey GOD's law, even as he realized that he might not be able to earn forgiveness.

At this same time, his son Jonathan said to a young man who bore his armor, "Come, and let us go over to the Philistines' garrison, that is on the other side." He did this without telling his father.

Saul stayed in the uttermost part of Gibeah under the pomegranate tree which is in Migron, and the people who were with him were about six hundred men. Ahijah, the son of Phinehas, the son of Eli, the priest of the LORD in Shiloh, wearing an ephod. And the people had not noticed that Jonathan was gone.

Jonathan sought to go over to the Philistines' garrison, and he found that between the rocky passes

there was a crag on the one side, and a crag on the other side. Jonathan said to the young man who bore his armor, "Come, and let us go over to the garrison of these uncircumcised. It may be that the LORD will work for us. For I know that the LORD worked to save and fight for his people, whether there are many or few." And his armor bearer said to him, "Do all that your heart inclines toward. I am with you, my heart is as your heart." So Jonathan said, "I see what the LORD wishes. We will pass over to the men, and we will reveal ourselves to them. If they say thus to us, 'Wait until we come to you,' then we will stand still in our place, and will not go up to them, for we will lose. But if they say this, 'Come up to us,' then we will go up, for the LORD has delivered them into our hand. This will be the sign to us."
They revealed themselves to the garrison of the Philistines: and the Philistines said, "The Hebrews are coming out of the holes where they had hidden themselves." And the men looked at the two of them alone, and they said, "Come up to us." So Jonathan said to his armor bearer, "Follow me. The LORD has delivered them into the hand of Israel." And they climbed toward the garrison, and the men fell in battle before Jonathan and his armor bearer. And there was a terror in the camp, in the field, and among all the people. The garrison and the raiders were terrified. They became a terror of GOD.[346]
And the watchmen of Saul in Gibeah of Benjamin saw that the multitude was scattering scattering against a small force. So Saul said to the people who were with him, "Count now, and see who is missing from us." When they had counted, Jonathan and his armor bearer were not there. Saul said to Ahijah, "Bring near the ephod," for he wore the ephod of a priest at that time before Israel. While Saul was speaking to the priest, that the tumult that was in the camp of the Philistines went on and increased. Saul said to the priest, "Withdraw your hand."
Saul and all the people who were with him were gathered together, and came to the battle. And every man's sword was against his fellow, for there was very great confusion. For there was the group of Jonathan and his shield bearer, there were Hebrews who were with the Philistines, who turned around to be with the Israelites who were with Saul and Jonathan, and there were all the men of Israel who had hidden themselves in the hill country of Ephraim, when they heard that the Philistines fled, even they also followed closely after them in the battle. So the LORD saved Israel that day, and the battle passed over by Beth Aven. And all the people with Saul were about ten thousand men. And the battle extended itself into every city in the hill country of Ephraim.
Even so, the LORD showed favor to Israel, but not necessarily Saul. This was because Saul committed a great blunder that day, for he had placed the people under an oath earlier this day, saying, "Until we are avenged of our enemies, let there be none of us food or we will be under a curse." So none of the people tasted food. All the people came into the forest, and there was honey on the ground. And while they were marching before the victory, his men where hungry. But even though the LORD ordained the honey, they feared the power of the curse, and would not eat.
During the battle however, one of the people had noticed while Jonathan was fighting that he dipped the end of his staff in a jar that contained a honeycomb, lifted it to his mouth, and it gave him strength and opened his eyes. So they told him, "Your father directly commanded the people with an oath, saying, 'Cursed is the man who eats food this day, until my enemies were avenged.' What were you doing disobeying his command? What if GOD punishes us for not obeying our king?" The people were faint.
Then Jonathan said, "My father has troubled the land. Please look how my eyes have been opened and the LORD has made me strong, because I tasted a little of this honey. Should you also not enjoy the spoils of the land." And they struck down the Philistines that day everywhere from Michmash to Aijalon. The people were very weak, and took sheep, cattle, and calves, and killed them on the ground. And the people ate them with the blood. Now the Jewish people never eat meat in this way, for meat is intended to be drained of its blood, then salted, then washed before cooking. And so, while Jonathan disobeyed the king in innocence, he had encouraged the people to disobey the dietary laws of Moses through their hunger.
Word reached Saul, with the people saying, "The people are sinning against the LORD, in that they eat meat with the blood." He said, "You have dealt treacherously. Roll a large stone this day." And Saul

[346] The original text tells that he killed twenty men in the garrison, but that I feel detracts from the text, which creates an impression of an unstoppable berserker without it.

said, "Disperse yourselves among the people, and tell them, 'Bring me here every man his ox, and every man his sheep, and kill them here, and eat; and do not sin against the LORD in eating meat with the blood.'" All the people brought every man his ox with him that night, and killed them there.
Saul built an altar to the LORD. And the LORD saw that he was earnest in his desire to follow the law, and the LORD considered forgiving him. Even so, the LORD was silent.
Saul said, "Let us go down after the Philistines by night, and take spoil among them until the morning light, and let us not leave a man of them." They said, "Do whatever seems good to you." Then the priest said, "Let us ask GOD." So Saul asked counsel of GOD, "Should I go down after the Philistines? Will you deliver them into the hand of Israel?" But the LORD did not answer him that day. And Saul said, "The LORD is still not talking to me. All you leaders of the people, investigate and see how this sin has arisen today. For, as the LORD lives, who saves Israel, if it is in Jonathan my son who causes this silence, he will surely die." But there was not a man among all the people who answered him.
Then he said to all Israel, "You be on one side, and I and Jonathan my son will be on the other side." The people said to Saul, "Do what seems good to you." Therefore Saul said, "LORD, GOD of Israel, why have you not answered me this day? If this sin is mine or in Jonathan my son, LORD, GOD of Israel, give Urim. But if this sin is in your people Israel, give Thummim." And they cast lots, and Jonathan and Saul were chosen, but the people were cleared.
And Saul said, "Cast lots between me and Jonathan my son. whoever the LORD will indicate to be taken by lot, let him die." And the people said to Saul, "This thing is not to be." And Saul prevailed over the people, and they cast lots between him and Jonathan his son. And Jonathan was selected.
Then Saul said to Jonathan, "Tell me what you have done." And Jonathan told him, and said, "I tasted some honey with the end of the staff that was in my hand. The people noticed, and I told them they should not go hungry, and they ate the meat with blood as you saw. I am to blame, and for that I must die." Saul said, "GOD do so and more also, if your sentence is not carried out, Jonathan."
But the people balked at this to Saul, "We were told that the LORD is a GOD of mercy and love, who loves justice. He is slow to anger and quick to forgive. Can this be a lie? Is GOD one who creates temptations only to trap us in punishment? How can any of us serve or worship a GOD who brings bounty, only to kill us?!?[347] Will Jonathan die, who has worked this great salvation in Israel? Far from it. As the LORD lives, let not one hair of his head fall to the ground, for he has worked with GOD this day." So the people pleaded with the LORD that Jonathan be rescued, and he did not die.
Then Saul went up from following the Philistines, and the Philistines went to their own place. Now when Saul had taken the kingdom over Israel, he fought against all his enemies on every side: against Moab, against the people of Ammon, against Edom, against Beth Rehob, against the king of Zobah, and the Amalekites. He was victorious wherever he turned. And Saul had sons and daughters in addition to Jonathan: Jishvi and Malkishua his sons, and Merob and Mikal his daughters. And the name of Saul's wife was Ahinoam the daughter of Ahimaaz. For the LORD had forgiven him, even though she[348] was giving him the silent treatment. And she blessed him in battle, so that when Saul saw any mighty man or any valiant man, he defeated him.

CHAPTER 15

Samuel conveyed to Saul that the LORD wanted him to strike at the Amalekites, and to leave nothing alive. And by nothing, he meant not to spare man nor beast, nor to take any sort of reward. So Saul summoned the people, and they were two hundred thousand footmen, and ten thousand of those men were of Judah.
Then Saul came to the city of Amalek, and lay in wait in the valley. And Saul said to the Kenites nearby, "Go away from the Amalekites, or you might also be hurt in the battle. You showed kindness to all the children of Israel, when they came up out of Egypt." So the Kenites left the area of the Amalekites. Then Saul struck the Amalekites, from Havilah to Shur (that is, before Egypt). He utterly destroyed all the people with the edge of the sword.

---

[347] Basically, the people's complaint is my complaint about these passages. The LORD must be a GOD of mercy and justice, or it is senseless to worship GOD. If GOD has mercy but no justice, the wicked are forgiven and go ahead to hurt others. But if there is justice but no mercy, people get hurt for crimes they might even not know about in advance.
[348] Normally, GOD is depicted as the same sex as the person involved with the LORD. But in this case, I'm making them opposite to denote that this is like a lover's quarrel.

But Saul allowed the people spare Agag, and the best of the sheep and the cattle, and all that was seemed good. But everything that was rejected, they utterly destroyed. But the LORD began to grieve over Saul, for Saul's heart was far away. And tears filled the LORD's eyes.[349]

Then the word of the LORD came to Samuel, saying, "I am sorry that I have made Saul king, for he has turned back from following me, and has not carried out my commandments."[350] And Samuel was angry on behalf of the LORD and he cried all night.

Samuel rose early to meet Saul in the morning, and he was told, "Saul came to Carmel, and he set up a monument for himself, and turned, and passed on, and went down to Gilgal." When Samuel came to Saul, he was offering up a burnt offering to the LORD, the best of the spoils which he had brought from Amalek. And when Samuel came to Saul, Saul said to him, "Look, I have performed the commandment of the LORD." Samuel asked, "Oh really? So what is this bleating of the sheep and the lowing of the cattle that I hear?" Saul told him, "I have brought them from Amalek. I told the people to spare the best of the sheep and the cattle to sacrifice to the LORD your GOD, and I have utterly destroyed the rest." In all this, Saul sincerely believed that he was doing the LORD's will.

Then Samuel said to Saul, "Stay, and I will tell you what the LORD has said to me last night." And Saul told him to go ahead. Samuel said, "Though you were little in your own sight, weren't you made the head of the tribes of Israel? The LORD anointed you king over Israel, and the LORD sent you to deal wisely with Israel, but you do not even care! You have failed to utterly destroy the Amalekites, for the LORD regarded them as wicked. Why, even these sheep and cattle are evil Amalekite livestock.[351] Why then did you not obey the voice of the LORD, but took the spoils, and did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD? And why have you left their king Agag alive?"

Saul apologized to Samuel for the wrong thing, "But... surely I have obeyed the voice of the LORD! I have utterly destroyed the Amalekites. But the people took of the spoil, the chief of the devoted things, to sacrifice to the LORD your GOD in Gilgal. Isn't the LORD pleased with my sacrifice? Is not my victory good to the LORD?"[352] Samuel said, "Does the LORD delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, or in obeying his voice? Surely, to listen and obey is better than to sacrifice. How is rebellion any different from the sin of witchcraft, and how is stubbornness any bit unlike idolatry? Because you have rejected the word of the LORD, he has also rejected you from being king." And Saul

---

[349] This is intended to tie together with the same sort of grief later expressed when JESUS wept, so I used the same phrasing.
[350] GOD is a human GOD, and is capable of pettiness. But this is also about how Saul failed to want to obey, rather than just the Amalekites.
[351] This sentence I added, because it was kinda funny.
[352] I suspect Saul's actual motivation was to please his own people. As a king, he actually isn't bad. But GOD is able to be fickle, and ironically, I think he wants to teach his people the error of their ways for choosing a king. That is, Saul isn't enough of a jerk. David is loved by the Jews, but he is an adulterer and a murderer of his own troops. Solomon is supposedly wise, but building the temple was actually a horrible decision.

was filled with regret. Saul said to Samuel, "I have sinned, for I have transgressed the commandment of the LORD and your words, because I feared the people and obeyed their voice. Please ask the LORD to pardon my sin, and turn again with me, that I may worship the LORD."
But Samuel refused. For Samuel could see that Saul was fixated specifically on the Amalekites, and not in earnestness to obey the LORD. So Samuel said to Saul, "I will not return with you, for you have rejected the word of the LORD. Likewise, the LORD has rejected you from being king over Israel."
Then Saul became desperate, and ran after Samuel. As Samuel turned about to go away, Saul grabbed the skirt of his robe, and it tore. Samuel said to him, "The LORD has torn the kingdom of Israel from you this day, and has given it to a neighbor of yours who is better than you."[353] Then he said, "I have sinned! Yet please honor me now before the elders of my people Israel, and return that I may worship the LORD your GOD." So Samuel went back with Saul, and he worshiped the LORD. Then Samuel said, "Bring here to me Agag the king of the Amalekites." Agag came to him with faltering steps. Agag said, "Surely the bitterness of death is past."
Samuel said, "As your sword has made women childless, so your mother will be childless among women." Samuel cut Agag in pieces before the LORD in Gilgal. Then Samuel went to Ramah, and Saul went up to his house to Gibeah of Saul. And Samuel did not see Saul again until the day of his death. But Samuel mourned for Saul. And the LORD grieved that he had made Saul king over Israel, for Saul's heart remained far away.

CHAPTER 16

The LORD said to Samuel, "How long will you mourn for Saul? I have rejected him from being king over Israel. Therefore, fill your horn with oil and go. I will send you to Jesse the Bethlehemite, for I have provided a king for myself among his sons." Samuel said, "How can I go? Does not your heart also mourn for Saul? Anyway, if Saul hears that I am replacing him, he will kill me." The LORD said, "Take a heifer with you, and say that you have come to sacrifice to the LORD. Call Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will show you what you will do. You will anoint to me the one who I name to you."
And Samuel did what the LORD said, and came to Bethlehem. And the elders of the city came to meet him trembling. And they said, "Is your visit peaceful, seer?" For they knew he was a prophet who could work wonders from the LORD. And he said, "My visit is indeed peaceful, for I have come to sacrifice to the LORD. Sanctify yourselves, and come with me to the sacrifice." He sanctified Jesse and his sons, and called them to the sacrifice.
When they had come, that he looked at Eliab, and said, "Surely the LORD's anointed is before him." But the LORD said to Samuel, "Do not look at his appearance or at the height of his stature, because I have rejected him. For humans do not see as GOD sees, for humans look at the outward appearance, but GOD looks at the heart."[354] Then Samuel looked at Abinadab. But he said, "Neither have I chosen this one." Then Samuel looked at Shimeah. He said, "Neither have I chosen this one." And Samuel looked at seven of his sons, but the LORD did not choose any of them. And Samuel said to Jesse, "The LORD has not chosen these."
Samuel said to Jesse, "Are all your children here?" He said, "There remains yet the youngest, and he is keeping the sheep. Why?" And Samuel said to Jesse, "The LORD has tasked me with anointed his chosen king. Send and get him, for we will not sit down until he comes here." At these words, Jesse sent for him to be brought in from the field.
Now David was a dreamer, and he spent his playing the harp. He had a pet fox that was as much a pet because it was cute as it was to keep it from eating the sheep. And the fox slept while he played the harp, so David had become skilled in using his instrument to calm the heart. He was also a skilled fighter, having taken down lions with his sling.
And he was reddish brown, and had beautiful eyes, and was handsome. And the LORD said, "Arise, anoint him, for he is the one." Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him in the midst of his

---

[353] "GOD will not retract or change his mind; for he is not a man that he should change his mind." But GOD *does* change his mind. During the time of Noah he was sorry he created humans. In Exodus and Amos have him repent and turn from his path. Even in First Samuel, GOD grieves that he made Saul king.
[354] The Jews want a Messiah based on human ideas of strength. JESUS is called an heir of David. But this is what this means. That he was picked not on human standards but because of GOD'S standards. All the same, GOD picks this man not because of strength but because of beauty, so there is a physical standard too.

brothers: and the *Ruach ha Kodesh* came mightily on David from that day forward.
This very day, the *Ruach ha Kodesh* departed from Saul, and an evil spirit troubled him, and he began to blaspheme against the *Ruach ha Kodesh*.[355] He began to speak of GOD as a cruel tyrant, even though GOD had forgiven his sins before. He also spoke loudly and angrily to anyone who would listen, declaring the ugliness and cruelty of creation, and how there is no purpose to life.[356]
Saul's servants said to him, "See now, an evil spirit troubles you. Command those who are before you, to seek out a man who is a skillful player on the harp. It will happen, when the evil spirit is on you, that he will play with his hand, and you will be well, and it will give you relief." Saul said to his servants, "Very well. Provide me now a man who can play well, and bring him to me."
Then one of the young men answered, and said, "I have seen a son of Jesse of Bethlehem. He is skillful in playing and articulate in speech, a shepherd who has brought down lions, and a handsome man. We believe that the LORD is with him."
So Saul sent messengers to Jesse, and said, "Send me David your son, who is with the sheep." And Jesse took a donkey and loaded it with bread and a skin of wine, and brought a young goat, and sent these with David his son to Saul. David came to Saul, and stood before him. Saul loved him greatly, and he became Saul's armor bearer. So Saul sent word to Jesse, "Please let David stay with me, for he has found favor in my sight." When the spirit of evil was on Saul, that David took the harp, and played with his hand. Then Saul was refreshed, and the spirit from GOD overcame the evil spirit, and it departed from him for a time.

CHAPTER 17

Saul was at war with the Philistines, and they had gathered together their armies to battle in Judah, and camped between Socoh and Azekah, in Ephes Dammim, which means "the boundary of blood."
Saul and the men of Israel were gathered together, and camped in the Valley of Elah, and set the battle in array against the Philistines. The Philistines stood on the mountain on the one side, and Israel stood on the mountain on the other side. And there was a valley between them.
In the camp of the Philistines, there was a champion named Goliath of Gath, whose height was nine feet nine inches.[357] For in those days, there were giants in the land, although not the giants of old. And his strength was great. He had a helmet of bronze on his head, and he was clad with a coat of mail, and the weight of the coat was as much as five thousand shekels of bronze.[358] And he had bronze shin guards on his legs, and a javelin of bronze between his shoulders. The staff of his spear was like a weaver's beam; and his spear's head weighed six hundred shekels of iron[359]: and his shield bearer went before him.
Goliath shouted to the armies of Israel, and said to them, "Why have you come out to set your battle in array? Am I not a Philistine, and you servants to Saul? Choose a man for yourselves, and let him come down to me. If he is able to fight with me and kill me, then we will be your servants. But if I prevail against him and kill him, then you will be our servants." The Philistine said, "I defy the armies of Israel this day. Give me a man, that we may fight together."
When Saul and all Israel heard those words of the Philistine, they were dispirited. And none of them dared stand against him.
But David was not currently among Saul's army, for he went back and forth from Saul's to feed his father's sheep at Bethlehem and then to supply food for his brothers. The Philistine drew near morning and evening, and presented himself forty days. Jesse said to David his son, "Now take for your brothers this parched grain, and these ten loaves, and carry them quickly to the camp and give them to your brothers, and bring these ten cheeses to the captain of their thousand. See how your

---

[355] When the *Ruach ha Kodesh* (the Holy Spirit) leaves a person, they are possessed by an evil spirit. A man cannot live with no spirit, so either it is the Holy Spirit or an evil one. I added text to align this with what JESUS said about GOD being able to forgive all sins, except for blasphemy against the Spirit.
[356] A person who leaves behind the truth of GOD instead is taken by nihilism, paranoia, and depression.
[357] Other text says six feet and nine inches, but Goliath is abnormally strong, as later text shows.
[358] Five thousand shekels weighs roughly one hundred and twenty-five lb. Goliath was literally carrying the weight of a smal person as armor.
[359] Just the head, not the shaft weighed sixteen lb. I've tried to lift a sixteen lb spear, and a person my height cannot do it easily. In any case, the shaft would be lighter, at maybe ten lbs. Still, this is a crazy heavy spear. Goliath was a total hulking brute. Between his helmet, spear, and other gear, he likely carried a hundred and seventy lb or more.

brothers are doing, and bring back news."
David rose up early in the morning, and left the sheep with a keeper, and he took supplies as Jesse had commanded him. He came to the place of the wagons, as the army which was going forth to the fight shouted for the battle. David left his baggage in the hand of the keeper of the baggage, and ran to the army to greet his brothers.
As he talked with them, there came up the champion Goliath out of the ranks of the Philistines, and he spoke the same words as before. And the soldiers continued to be terrified. They said to David, "Look at this man who stands against us! Can anyone stand against him? Any man who kills him, the king will surely enrich him with great riches, and will give him his daughter, and make his father's house exempt in Israel." David spoke to the men who stood by him, saying, "Why have none of you faced him?"
His eldest brother Eliab heard when he spoke to the men, and he spoke angrily against David, "Why have you come down? With who have you left those few sheep in the wilderness? Are you shirking your duties and being lazy that you might see the battle?" And the others also mocked him, telling him that the battle was no place for children, but David said to Saul, "Let not you heart be afraid because of him. I will go and fight with this Philistine." But Saul said to David, "I will not risk you. You are the one who calms my spirit with your harp. You are too young, and he is a seasoned warrior." But David said to Saul, "I was keeping my father's sheep, and when a lion or a bear came to take a lamb out of the flock, I went out after him. And I killed the lion and rescued rescued the lamb from of his mouth. I struck down both the lion and the bear. Should not this uncircumcised Philistine will be as one of them? I will smite him this day, and remove this disgrace from Israel. For who is this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should defy the armies of the living GOD?" David said, "The LORD who delivered me out of the paw of the lion, and out of the paw of the bear, he will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine." Saul said to David, "Go; and the LORD will be with you."
Saul dressed David with his clothing. He put a helmet of bronze on his head, and he clad him with a coat of mail. David strapped his sword on his clothing, and he tried to move, and his body was rigid and fell over, for he had not tested it.[360] Then David said to Saul, "I can't go with these! I can't even move."
So they took them off him. He took his shepherd's staff in his hand, and chose for himself five smooth stones out of the river, and put them in the shepherd's bag which he had. His sling was in his hand, and he drew near to the Philistine. The Philistine likewise closed in on David, and the man who bore the shield went before him. When the Philistine looked and saw David, he despised him, for he was but a callow youth. And Goliath said to David, "Am I a dog, that you come to me with a stick and stones?" And David said, "No, worse than a dog." And the Philistine cursed David by his gods, saying also, "Come to me, and I will give your flesh to the birds of the sky, and to the animals of the field."
Then David said to the Philistine, "You come to me with a shield and with a spear, but I come to you in the name of the LORD of hosts, GOD of the armies of Israel, who you have defied. Today, the LORD will deliver you into my hand, and take your head from off you. And I will give your corpse and the corpses of the Philistine army this very day to the birds of the air, and to the wild animals of the land. Then all Earth may know that there is a GOD in Israel, and that all this assembly may know that the LORD doesn't save with shield and spear. For the battle is the LORD's, and he will give you into our hand."
But Goliath blasphemed against the LORD, "Bah! My gods have made me a mighty titan before you and your people. Look at my muscles, look at my weapons, look at my armor! *Your GOD himself could not pierce this armor!*"[361]
The Philistine arose, and rushed even closer to David. But David put his hand in his bag, took a stone, and slung it, and struck the Philistine in his forehead; and the stone punched through the helmet into his forehead,[362] and he fell on his face to Earth.

---

[360] The reader needs to think about the kid in *A Christmas Story*, who is dressed by his mother in multiple coats.
[361] I wanted to draw a parallel between Goliath and the famous last words of the man in charge of the *Titanic*.
[362] To put things in perspective, I did research. The Valley of Elah indeed has stones, mainly limestone and flint. Limestone is somewhat softer than bronze. Flint is slightly harder. However, he wore a thick helmet, and asking about the general speed you'd need to puncture metal, it was in the upper 200 or 300 feet per second range. This was assuming modern sling ammo,

So David prevailed over the Philistine with a sling and with a stone, and struck the Philistine, and killed him; but there was no sword in the hand of David. Then David ran, and stood over the Philistine, and took a sword that was like a dagger to one of Goliath's size, and drew it out of its sheath, and killed him, and cut off his head therewith. When the Philistines saw that their champion was dead, they fled.
The men of Israel and of Judah arose, and shouted, and pursued them as far as Gath, and to the gates of Ekron. The wounded of the Philistines fell down there. The children of Israel returned from chasing after the Philistines, and they plundered their camp. And David took the head of the Philistine, and brought it to Jerusalem, but he put his armor in his tent. And the troops asked what manner of boy this was, and whose son he was. When David returned from the slaughter of the Philistine, they took him, and brought him before Saul with the head of the Philistine in his hand. Saul said to him, "Whose son are you, you young man?" David answered, "I am the son of Jesse of Bethlehem."

CHAPTER 18

After David had finished speaking to Saul, the soul of Jonathan was joined with the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul. And Saul would no longer let return to his father's house. So Jonathan and David made a covenant, because he loved him as his own soul. Jonathan stripped himself of the robe that was on him, his clothing, his sword, his bow, and his sash.[363] And he gave it to David. And when Saul David him out in war, he succeeded wherever Saul sent him. And it was good in the sight of all the people, and also in the sight of Saul's servants.
When David returned from the slaughter of the Philistine, the women came out of all the cities of Israel to meet King Saul. And they came with tambourines, with joy, with song and dance, and with other instruments of music. The women sang one to another as they played, and said, "Saul has slain his thousands, David his ten thousands." But these words greatly angered Saul, "They have said this about me, where is my pride? What can more do I have than him but the kingdom?" And after this day, Saul no longer cared for David, but eyed him with suspicion.
The next day, an evil spirit came mightily on Saul. David played with his harp, as he did regularly, but Saul was not calmed as before. Saul put his spear in his hand, and he threw the spear at David. But the spear missed, and he escaped his presence. Saul chased after him, but he escaped a second time. And Saul was afraid of David, because the LORD protected him, and he had departed from Saul. So Saul removed him from his presence as a harp player, and instead made him his captain over a thousand.
After this, David and Saul behaved wisely and tried to keep to themselves. But all Israel and Judah loved David, for he went out and came in before them. As jealous as Saul was of David's glory, he too was in awe of him. So Saul said to David, "My elder daughter Merob, I will give her to you as wife. Only be valiant for me, and fight the LORD's battles." For Saul thought to himself, "I will not let my hand be on him, but I wish that the hand of the Philistines be on him."
David said to Saul, "Who am I, and what is my life, or my father's family in Israel, that I should be son-in-law to the king?" For he was a shepherd of Jesse's family, not a powerful man, his success came from the LORD. But Merob was not Saul's to give, because she was promised to Adriel the Meholathite as wife. However, another daughter of Saul named Mikal, noticed David. And she told Saul that she wanted to marry him. And Saul thought, "I will give her to him, that she may be a snare to him. Maybe the Philistines may be against him if I push him." Therefore Saul said to David, "You will this day be my son-in-law a second time."
Then Saul commanded his servants, "Tell David that I have delight in him, and that the servants love him. And from now on, he will be son-in-law." Saul's servants spoke those words in the ears of David. But David said, "Does it seems to you a little thing to be the king's son-in-law, since I am a poor man, and insignificant?" The servants of Saul told him his response. Saul said, "You will tell David, 'The king desires no dowry except one hundred foreskins of the Philistines, to be avenged of the king's

---

such as a musket ball, not a flint stone. In case you needed to understand that this was in fact a miracle, and not a matter of David's brawn.

[363] This is often used in marriages between men and other men, because it sounds gay as fuck. But no, Jonathan is just a loyal friend, and stop fanboying about it!

enemies.'" Now Saul thought to make David fall by the hand of the Philistines.
But David was pleased at the idea of being the king's son-in-law, and he did his best. And the LORD also blessed his endeavor, and David indeed killed one hundred men and gave their foreskins to the king. So Saul gave him Mikal his daughter as wife. So when Saul saw that the LORD was with David, and that all Israel loved him, he was even more afraid of David.
Saul was David's enemy continually, but David did not see it this way. David's name was highly esteemed by Israel, while Saul and the Philistines feared him.

CHAPTER 19

Saul again sought to kill David, this time by ordering his son and his servants to do so. But Jonathan cared for David, and warned him, "My father Saul seeks to kill you. Be watchful and take care of yourself in the morning, and make yourself hidden." Jonatha also spoke to his father, "You are the king, are you not? You should not be seen in sin against a servant, especially one who has not sinned against you. His works have been very good toward you, he put his life in his hand and struck the Philistine, and the LORD worked a great victory for all Israel. Why then will you sin against innocent blood, to kill David without a cause?"
Saul listened to the voice of Jonathan. And Saul swore, "As the LORD lives, he will not be put to death by my hand."
There was war again. David went out, and fought with the Philistines, and killed them with a great slaughter; and they fled before him. But Saul was again envious, and hoped he would die in battle. So Saul against sent messengers to David's house, to watch him, and to kill him in the morning. Mikal, David's wife, told him, saying, "If you do not save your life tonight, tomorrow you will be killed."
So Mikal let David down through the window. He went, fled, and escaped. Mikal took a *teraphim*,[364] and laid it in the bed, and put a pillow of goats' hair at its head, and covered it with the clothes.
When Saul sent messengers to take David, she said, "He is sick." Saul sent the messengers to see David, saying, "Bring him up to me in the bed, that I may kill him." When the messengers came in, the teraphim was in the bed, with the pillow of goats' hair at its head. Saul said to Mikal, "Why have you deceived me thus, and let my enemy go, so that he is escaped?" Mikal answered Saul, "Is he not the husband that I love? He wanted to leave rather than fight you, so I have protected him." David fled and came to Samuel at Ramah, and told him all that Saul had done to him. And he and Samuel went and lived in the dwellings.
And Saul was told, "David is in the dwellings at Ramah." Saul sent messengers to capture David. But when they saw a company of the prophets prophesying, and Samuel standing as head over them, the *Ruach ha Kodesh* came upon the messengers of Saul, and they also prophesied. When it was told to Saul, he sent other messengers, and they also prophesied. Saul sent messengers a third time, and they also prophesied.
And Saul became very angry, and he himself also went to Ramah, and came to the cistern of the threshing floor that is on the bare hill. And he asked, "Where are Samuel and David?" And one said, "They are in the dwellings at Ramah." So he went there to the dwellings at Ramah. Then the *Ruach ha Kodesh* came on him also, and he went on, and prophesied, until he came to the dwellings in Ramah.[365] He also stripped off his clothes, and he also prophesied before Samuel, and lay down naked all that day and all that night. Therefore they say, "Is Saul not also among the prophets?"

CHAPTER 20

Then David fled from the dwellings at Ramah, and came and said before Jonathan, "What have I done? Why does your father seek my life?" Jonathan said to him, "Far from it; you will not die. My father does nothing either great or small without disclosing it to me." And David said, "Your father knows well that I have found favor in your eyes. This is why he says, 'Do not let Jonathan know this, or he will be grieved.' Even so, as the LORD lives and as you live, there is but a step between me and death." Then Jonathan said to David, "Whatever you desire, I will even do it for you."
So David said to Jonathan, "Tomorrow is the new moon, and I should not fail to sit with the king to

[364] Teraphim are person-shaped idols. The Jews had a real problem with these, but in this case, one was dressed up to save his life.
[365] This story is kinda funny. Seriously, avoid the town of Ramah if you don't want to prophesy.

eat. Instead, let me go so that I may hide myself in the field until evening. Go to him. If your father missed me at all, then say, 'David urgently requested of me that he might run to Bethlehem his city, for it is the yearly sacrifice there for all the family.' And see what he says. If he says, 'It is good,' then I will have peace. But if he is angry, then you know that evil is planned by him. Therefore deal kindly with me; for you have brought me into a covenant of the LORD with you. But if there is iniquity in me, you can kill me yourself. For why should you bring me to your father, if I wish harm?"
Jonathan said, "Far be it from you. If I should know that evil were determined by my father to come on you, wouldn't I tell you that?" Then David said to Jonathan, "Who will tell me if your father answers you harshly?" Jonathan said to David, "Come, and let us go out into the field." They both went out into the field. Jonathan said to David, "The LORD, the GOD of Israel, is witness. When I have studied my father, if there is good toward toward, I will send for you. GOD do so to me, and if my father wishes to do you evil and I do not disclose it to you, and send you away that you may go in peace. And may the LORD be with you, as he has been with my father. And if I am still alive, deal loyally with me. But if I die, do not cut off your loyalty from my house forever. And when the LORD cuts off the enemies of David, each one from the face of Earth, if the name of Jonathan be cut off from the house of David, then let it be at the hand of the enemies of David." Thus Jonathan swore to David, because he loved him, for he loved him as he loved his own soul.
Meanwhile, Mikal also pined after David, saying "If my father Saul should kill David, I cannot see how I would go on living."[366] And she bemoaned that her father Saul was doing this. Even so, she did not dare stand against Saul, as he was the king.
Jonathan said to David, "Tomorrow is the new moon, and you will be missed because your seat will be empty. On the third day you should go down quickly, and come to the place where you hid yourself when this started, and stay by that mound. And as for me, on the third day I will shoot arrows to its side, as though I shot at a mark. If I tell the boy to collect the arrow, have no fear for there is peace to you and no hurt, as the LORD lives. But if I tell the boy that the arrow is too far for him, then go your way, for the LORD has sent you away. Remember, the LORD is a witness between you and me forever."
So David hid himself in the field. And when the new moon had come, the king sat at the table to eat. The king sat on his seat by the wall, as he did at other times, and Jonathan sat opposite. Abner sat by Saul's side, but David's place was empty. Nevertheless Saul did not say anything that day: for he thought, "Something has happened to him. Perhaps he is ceremonially unclean and cannot visit?" But the second day, he noticed the seat was empty as well. So he asked Jonathan, "Why hasn't the son of Jesse come to the table, either yesterday or today?"
Jonathan answered Saul, and said, "David earnestly asked leave of me to go to Bethlehem. He said that they are having a sacrifice in the city, and his brothers have ordered him to be there. Therefore he has not come to the king's table." Then Saul's anger was kindled against Jonathan, and he said to him, "You son of a perverse rebellious woman, do I not know that you are the companion of the son of Jesse to your own shame, and to the shame of your mother's nakedness? For as long as the son of Jesse lives on Earth, your kingdom will not be established. Therefore now send and bring him to me, for he will surely die."
But Jonathan answered Saul, "Why should he be put to death? What has he done?" Then Saul raised a weapon at him to strike him, and Jonathan realized that this evil from his father to kill David was determined. So Jonathan abruptly left the table, knocking over his glass, and he ate no food that day, for he grieved for David. Mikal also cared for David, but she left quietly to follow Jonathan.
In the morning, that Jonathan went out into the field at the time appointed with David, and a little boy with him. He said to the boy, "Run, find now the arrows which I shoot." And as the boy ran, he shot an arrow, causing it to pass beyond, toward the city. But Jonathan called after the youth, "Forget it, that arrow is too far. Let us return." Jonathan's boy gathered up the arrows, and came to his master. But the boy did not know anything. Only Jonathan and David knew what this meant. Jonathan gave his weapons to his boy, and said to him, "Go, carry them to the city."
As soon as the boy was gone, David came out of hiding from beside the mound, and fell on his face to the ground, and bowed himself three times. They wept one with another, and David wept the most.

---

[366] Added this bit about Mikal because this is too damned gay. Jonathan is hardly the only person who cares for David.

Jonathan said to David, "Go in peace, because we have both sworn in the name of the LORD. The LORD will be between me and you, between my descendants and your descendants forever." He arose and departed, and Jonathan went into the city.
Now Mikal had been hiding behind a tree, following Jonathan because she perceived he knew where David was, and when she saw him, her heart wept for him. And she came out of hiding and wept, "David!" And she kissed him, and they cried together. But David wanted her to go, saying, "Saul seeks my life. It is not safe for you here." But Mikal said, "Are we not of one flesh, my husband? How can I be separate from you?"[367] And she went with David where he went for a time after that, before returning to her father.

CHAPTER 21

And David traveled with Mikal along for the ride. David came to Nob to Ahimelech the priest. Ahimelech asked him, "Why are you traveling with a woman, and not your men?" David said to the priest, "The king has commanded me to go on business, and she is traveling with me so that it will appear we are simply husband and wife traveling together. If you have five loaves of bread, please share them. If not, give what there is."[368] But the priest told David, "There is no common bread in my control, but there is holy bread. If the young men have kept themselves from women, they may eat of it. But surely you slept with that woman who is with you." But David answered the priest, "I take my missions seriously. Neither I, nor she have done any such thing. Even when it is an ordinary mission, I kept myself pure. So how much more today?" So the priest gave him what had been consecrated, for there was no bread there but the show bread, that had been removed before the LORD, to put hot bread in the day when it was taken away.
Now a certain man of the servants of Saul was there that day, detained before the LORD; and his name was Doeg the Edomite, the best of the herdsmen who belonged to Saul. David said to Ahimelech, "Isn't there here under your control who has weapons? For I have brought nothing with me, because the king's business required haste." The priest said, "Here is the sword of Goliath the Philistine, who you killed in the Valley of Elah, wrapped in a cloth behind an ephod. If you will take that, do so, for there is no other except that here." David said, "There is none like that. Give it to me." David arose, and fled that day for fear of Saul, and went to the king of Gath named Achish. But the servants of Achish said to him, "Isn't this David the king of the land? Did they not sing one to another about him in dances?" David laid up these words in his heart, and was very afraid of Achish. So he pretended to be mad in their hands, and drummed on the doors of the gate, and let his spittle run down his beard. And Mikal followed his lead, disheveling her hair and behaving as though wild. Then Achish said to his servants, "These people are mad. Why then have you brought them to me? Do I lack madmen, that you have brought them to play the madman in my presence?"

CHAPTER 22

The two of them therefore departed there, and escaped to the cave of Adullam. When his brothers and all his father's house heard it, they went down there to David. Everyone who was in distress, everyone who was in debt, and everyone who was discontented gathered themselves to him, and he became captain over them. So it was that there were with David about four hundred men.
David went there to Mizpeh of Moab, and he said to the king of Moab, "Please let us stay with you, until I know what GOD will do for me." He brought them before the king of Moab, and they lived with him all the while that David was in the stronghold. The prophet Gad said to David, "Do not stay in the stronghold. Depart, and go into the land of Judah." Then David and those with him departed, and came into the forest of Hereth.
Saul heard that David had been discovered, and those who were with him. Now Saul was in Gibeah, sitting under the tamarisk tree at the high place, with his spear in his hand, and all his servants were

---

[367] This addition is because of a personal pet peeve. One of the things that really bothers me about the Bible is how women are seen as an accessory, and not as an agent aligned with their husband. We saw this in the story of Isaac, where Isaac sent a servant to meet his wife instead of meeting her himself. And we see it with how out of the picture Mikal is until David eventually cheats on her. Fuck that. No, I don't approve of the distorted message of "independence" that tells women they don't need a man either. Instead, men and women are interdependent complements to each other. Mikal is not gonna act like she doesn't need David, but she will be there for him. This also makes Bathsheba even worse.
[368] This is where JESUS's mention of the show bread comes from.

standing about him. And he said to them, "Hear now, you Benjamites. Will the son of Jesse give everyone of you fields and vineyards, will he make you all captains of thousands and captains of hundreds? Will all of you have conspired against me, and there is none who discloses to me when my son makes a covenant with the son of Jesse? Is there none of you who is sorry for me, or discloses to me that my son has stirred up him against me, to lie in wait as at this day?"
Then Doeg the Edomite, who stood by the servants of Saul, answered and said, "I saw the son of Jesse coming to Nob, to Ahimelech the son of Ahitub. He was traveling with a woman and carrying bread from the priest. He inquired of GOD, gave him food, and gave him the sword of Goliath the Philistine."
Then the king sent to call Ahimelech the priest, and all his father's house, the priests who were in Nob. And they came all of them to the king. Saul said, "Hear now, you son of Ahitub." He answered, "Here I am, my lord."
Saul asked him, "Why have you conspired against me, you and the son of Jesse, in that you have given him bread, and a sword, and have inquired of GOD for him, that he should rise against me, to lie in wait, as at this day?"
Then Ahimelech answered the king, and said, "Who among all us is so faithful as David, who is the king's son-in-law, and a commander over your bodyguard, and honored in your house? Have I today begun to inquire of GOD for him? Be it far from me. Do not let the king impute anything to me, nor to all the house of my father. For I know nothing of all this, less or more."
The king said, "You will surely die, Ahimelech, you, and all your father's house." The king said to the guard who stood about him, "Turn, and kill the priests of the LORD, because their hand also is with David. They knew that he fled, and they did not disclose it to me." But the servants of the king wouldn't put forth their hand to fall on the priests of the LORD.
So the king said instead to Doeg, "Turn and attack the priests." Doeg the Edomite turned, and he attacked the priests, and he killed on that day eighty-five people who wore a linen ephod. He struckthe city of the priests Nob with the edge of the sword, men and women, children and nursing babies, and cattle and donkeys and sheep. But one of the sons of Ahimelech named Abiathar escaped. And he fled after David. Abiathar told David that Saul had slain the LORD's priests.
David said to Abiathar, "I knew on that day, when Doeg the Edomite was there, that he would surely tell Saul. I am responsible for all the lives of your father's house. Stay with me, do not be afraid; for he who seeks my life seeks your life. For with me you will be in safeguard."

CHAPTER 23

David was told, "The Philistines are fighting against Keilah, and are robbing the threshing floors."
So David inquired of the LORD, saying, "Will I go and strike these Philistines?" The LORD said to David, "Go strike the Philistines, and save Keilah."
David's men said to him, "We are afraid here in Judah: how much more then if we go to Keilah against the armies of the Philistines?" Then David inquired of the LORD yet again. The LORD answered him, and said, "Arise, go down to Keilah; for I will deliver the Philistines into your hand." So David and his men went to Keilah, and fought with the Philistines, and brought away their livestock, and killed them with a great slaughter. So David saved the inhabitants of Keilah.
When Abiathar the son of Ahimelech fled to David, he went down with David to Keilah, having an ephod in his hand. Now it was told Saul that David had come to Keilah. So Saul said, "GOD has sold him into my hand, for he has shut himself in by entering into a town that has gates and bars." And Saul summoned all the people to war, to go down to Keilah, to besiege David and his men.
David knew that Saul was devising mischief against him; and he said to Abiathar the priest, "Bring the ephod here." Then David said, "LORD, GOD of Israel, I have surely heard that Saul seeks to come to Keilah, to destroy the city for my sake. And now, will Saul come down, as I have heard? LORD, GOD of Israel, tell me." And the LORD said, "He will come down."
Then David asked the the LORD, "Will the men of Keilah deliver me and my men into the hand of Saul?" The LORD said, "They will deliver you up." Then David and his men, who were about six hundred, arose and departed out of Keilah, and went wherever they could go. And Saul was told that David had escaped Keilah; so he gave up the pursuit.
David stayed in the wilderness in the strongholds, and remained in the hill country in the wilderness

of Ziph. Saul sought him every day, but the LORD did not deliver him into his hand. Now David was afraid that Saul had come out to seek his life.
Jonathan, Saul's son, set out and came to David at Horesh and encouraged him in the LORD. He said to him, "Do not be afraid; for the hand of Saul my father will not find you. You will be king over Israel, and I will be next to you; and that also Saul my father knows." They both made a covenant before the LORD. David stayed at Horesh, while Jonathan prepared to return to his house.
Then the Ziphites came up to Saul to Gibeah, saying, "Doesn't David hide himself with us in the strongholds at Horesh, on the hill of Hakilah, which is on the south of Jeshimon? Now therefore, O king, come down, according to all your desire to come down. It will be our responsibility to deliver him up into the king's hand."
Saul said, "You are blessed by the LORD; for you have had compassion on me. Please go investigate again, and look around and learn the place where he is, for I am told that he is very clever. Find out all the hiding places where he hides himself, and come back to me when you know for certain, and I will go with you. And it will happen, if he is in the land, that I will search for him among all the thousands of Judah." So they arose, and went to Ziph before Saul. But David and his men had moved to the wilderness of Maon.
Now Mikal was still with David, having resolved to stay with him. And David told Mikal, "Return home to Saul, because if you are with me when he comes, his men may hurt you." She did not want to go, but he persisted, and prevailed upon her to leave. [369] So when Jonathan went to his house, Mikal was sent back to her home with him.
Eventually, Saul learned that David hid in Maon. When Saul heard that, he pursued David in the wilderness of Maon. And Saul went on one side of the mountain, and David and his men on the other side of the mountain. And David was hurrying to get away for fear of Saul, because Saul and his men surrounded David and his men to take them.
But a messenger came to Saul, saying, "Hurry and come; for the Philistines have made a raid on the land." So Saul returned from pursuing after David, and went against the Philistines. Therefore they called that place Rock of Divisions. David went up from there, and lived in the strongholds of En Gedi.

CHAPTER 24

But Saul was informed of David's location after some time following after the Philistines, and he took three thousand men to pursue him. On the way he passed rocks inhabited by wild goats, and saw a sheep pen by the way.[370] And David and his men were inside the cave, and his men told him, "This is the day which the LORD promised to deliver your enemies into your hand. Do whatever seems right to you." So David left the cave and cut off the edge of Saul's robe without him noticing. But after this, David was stricken with guilt and his heart hurt.[371] He said to his men, "The LORD forbid that I should do this thing to my lord, the LORD's anointed, to put forth my hand against him, since he is the LORD's anointed." In this way, David did not consider power to be a thing to be grasped or exploited.[372] So David did not allow the men to rise against Saul. And Saul rose up out of the cave, and went on his way.
David went out of the cave, and called after Saul, "My lord, you are the king." When Saul looked behind him, David bowed with his face to Earth, and showed respect. David said to Saul, "Why do you listen to men's words, who say that I seek your harm? This day your eyes have seen how that the LORD had delivered you today into my hand in the cave, but I refused to kill you. I will not put forth my hand against my lord; for he is the LORD's anointed. Look, here is the skirt of your robe in my hand. I cut off the skirt of your robe, and yet did not kill you. See for yourself that there is neither evil nor disobedience in my hand, and I have not sinned against you, though you hunt for my life to take

---

[369] I needed this part to fix a plothole created by her joining earlier. Saul tries to marry her off, but she has left because of changes that I added, so she needs to go back.
[370] It also mentions Saul relieving himself. I'm not sure how it's relevant that Saul is peeing or pooping.
[371] The robe of the king carries much symbolism. Cutting the robe represented attacking sovereignty which GOD himself ordained. The tassels also signify the covenant.
[372] There is a parallel between this bemoaning the loss of the robe and JESUS not considering being GOD's heir something to be taken advantage of.

it. May the LORD judge between me and you, and may the LORD avenge me of you. But as for me, my hand will not be on you. Against who has the King of Israel come out? Who do you pursue? May the LORD therefore be judge and give sentence between me and you. May he see and plead my cause, and deliver me out of your hand."
And Saul saw his remorse and said, "Is this your voice, my son David?" So Saul lifted up his voice, and wept. He said to David, "You are more righteous than I. You have done good to me, whereas I have done great evil to you. And you have declared this day how you have dealt well with me, in that the LORD had delivered me up into your hand and you did not kill me. For if a man finds his enemy, will he let him go away unharmed? Therefore may the LORD reward you good for that which you have done this day. Now, I know that you will surely be king, and that the kingdom of Israel will be established in your hand." And David mad a vow not to hurt his sons.
David swore to Saul. Saul went home, but David and his men went up to the stronghold.

CHAPTER 25

Samuel died, and all Israel gathered themselves together and lamented him, then they buried him in his house at Ramah. And David arose, and he went down to the wilderness of Maon. In Maon, there was a man whose possessions were in Carmel that had three thousand sheep and a thousand goats, and he was shearing his sheep. The man's name was Nabal, and he had a wife named Abigail who was intelligent and beautiful. And it seemed to David that this man was harsh and evil in his dealings, and besides which he was a Calebite. So David in his heart desired Abigail for himself, but rationalized it.[373]
David heard that Nabal was in the wilderness shearing his sheep, and he sent ten men to greet him. But David decided that Nabal's words were arrogant. The servants rightly reported back that Nabal feared he would take his bread, his wine, and his meat that he had slaughtered for the shearers of his sheep, and give it to men who I do not know where they come from. Now David was enraged at these (honest) words, and he said to his men, "Every man put on his sword." So every man put on his sword. About four hundred men followed David, while two hundred stayed by the baggage. But one of the young men who served Nabal told Abigail, Nabal's wife, saying, "David sent messengers out of the wilderness to greet our master, and now David wishes to fight him. But the messengers were very good to us and we were not hurt, nor did we miss anything as long as we went with them, when we were in the fields. Now therefore know and consider what you will do, for evil is determined against our master, and against all his house. For he is such a worthless fellow that one can't speak to him without being offended."
Then Abigail hurried and took two hundred loaves of bread, two bottles of wine, five sheep ready dressed, five measures of parched grain, one hundred clusters of raisins, and two hundred cakes of figs, and laid them on donkeys. She said to her servants, "Go on before me, and I will come after you." But she did not tell her husband, Nabal. And she rode on her donkey, and came down by the covert of the mountain, that David and his men came down toward her. And she met them.
Now David said, "Surely in vain have I kept all that this fellow has in the wilderness, so that nothing was missed of all that pertained to him. He has returned my evil for good. GOD do so to me, if I leave what belongs to him by the morning light."
When Abigail saw David, she hurried, and got off from her donkey, and fell before David on her face, and bowed herself to the ground. She fell at his feet, and said, "My lord, let the blame be on me. Let me speak in your ears. Hear my words, and please do not let this worthless fellow Nabal ruin your experience. Nabal is indeed a fool, but I did not see the young men who you sent, so the shame is mine alone. Now therefore, my lord, as the LORD lives, and as you live, since the LORD has restrain you from blood, from avenging yourself against your enemies. Let this present which I have brought to you be given to the young men who follow you. Forgive the trespass of mine. For the LORD will certainly make a sure house, because you fight the battles of the LORD. Let evil not be found in you all your days. When the LORD has done to you according to all the good that he has spoken concerning you, and will have appointed you prince over Israel, I wish that this will be no grief to you. When the LORD has dealt well with my lord, then remember your handmaid."

[373] The original text treats this as fact that he is harsh in his doings, but David is clearly a flawed man.

David said to Abigail, "Blessed is the LORD, the GOD of Israel, who sent you this day to meet me. Blessed is your discretion, and blessed are you, that have kept me this day from blood, and from avenging myself against your husband. As the LORD the GOD of Israel lives, he has withheld me from hurting you. Unless you had hurried and come to meet me, surely there wouldn't have been left to Nabal by the morning light even the stain on a wall."
So David also said to her, "Go up in peace to your house. I have listened to your voice, and have granted your request." When Abigail came to Nabal, he was holding a feast in his house. Nabal was very drunk, and behaving like an idiot. So Abigail told him nothing until the morning light. In the morning, when Nabal was sober, his wife told him these things, and his heart died within him, and he became unfeeling like a stone. And ten days after this, Nabal died from mysterious causes.[374]
When David heard that Nabal was dead, he said, "Blessed is the LORD, who has taken my side in the matter of Nabal's insult, and has kept back others from evil. The LORD has returned the evildoing of Nabal on his own head." David sent for Abigail, to take her to him as wife. Abigail arose, rode on a donkey with five handmaids who followed her, and followed after the messengers of David. And she met with David and became his wife. David also took Ahinoam of Jezreel, and they both became his wives.
Meanwhile, Saul had also promised Mikal, David's wife, to Palti the son of Laish.

CHAPTER 26

And David feared Saul because despite the meeting in the cave, Saul continued to wish him harm, and sought after his life.[375] And Saul had married his former wife Mikal to another, and clearly wished him harm. So David fled to Gath with his two remaining wives, Ahinoam from Jezreel and Abigail from Carmel. And Saul did not follow them there. And the king of Gath named Achish gave land called Ziklag, which remains to the kings of Judah. And David lived in the country of the Philistines was a full year and four months.
David took his men while he lived in this land, and made war against the Geshurites, and the Girzites, and the Amalekites. And the land was inhabited from Telem, going in the direction of Shur, as far as the land of Egypt. David struck the land, and saved neither man nor woman alive, and took away the sheep, and the cattle, and the donkeys, and the camels, and the clothing; and he returned, and came to Achish. And so it was that in the name of the LORD and of Israel, David won land. And Achish would ask him, "Against who have you made a raid today?" Then David would say, "Against the Negev of Judah," or "Against the Negev of Jerahmeel," or "Against the Negev of the Kenizzites." David saved none to bring them to Gath, lest they should say, "David has done this, and this has been his way all the time he has lived in the country of the Philistines." So Achish believed David, saying, "He has made his people Israel utterly to abhor him. Therefore he will be my servant forever."
In those days, the Philistines gathered their armies together for warfare, to fight with Israel. Achish said to David, "Know assuredly that you are to go out with me to battle, you and your men." And Achish wanted David to be his bodyguard.

CHAPTER 27

In those days, Samuel was dead and all Israel had lamented him. And Saul had removed the mediums and summoners from the land.
But the Philistines gathered themselves together, and camped in Shunem: and Saul gathered all Israel together, and they camped in Gilboa. When Saul saw the army of the Philistines, he was afraid, and his heart trembled. So Saul prayed to the LORD, but the LORD did not answer him, neither by dreams, nor by prophets. For the LORD had left his presence, since he was not earnest in his obedience of GOD, and was doing what was not asked of him by repeatedly going after David. Indeed, Saul did not even know why the LORD was angry. And indeed, he had no desire to find out.
He could find no aid from the LORD, so Saul said to his servants, "Find for me a woman who is a medium, that I may go to her and inquire of her." And his servants loved GOD, and begged him not to do such a thing, but he ordered them. So his servants said to him, "There is a woman who is a

[374] The text says the LORD killed him, but I have doubts about this...
[375] Some of the text is merged to reduce chapters. This is because it seems to be repeated incidents where the editors didn't noticed the similarities, and decided to include it.

medium at Endor. You may go to her if it pleases you."
So Saul disguised himself, and went to her house, and he[376] came to the woman by night. And he said, "Divine a spirit for me, please, and bring up for me the one who I name to you."
The woman said to him, "You know what Saul has done, how he has cut off the mediums and summoners out of the land. Why then do you lay a snare for my life, to cause me to die?" But Saul swore to her by the LORD, saying, "As the LORD lives, no punishment will happen to you for this thing."
Then the woman said, "Who will I bring up to you?" He said, "Bring the prophet Samuel up for me."
When the woman saw Samuel, she cried with a loud voice, "Why have you deceived me? For he has told me that you are Saul."
Saul said to her, "Do not be afraid. For what do you see?" The woman said to Saul, "I see one coming up out of Earth." He asked her, "What does he look like?" She answered, "An old man comes up. He is covered with a robe." And she described him in detail, though Saul could not see anything. So Saul perceived that it was Samuel, and he bowed with his face to the ground in respect. But Samuel said to Saul, "Why have you disturbed me, to bring me up?" And the woman repeated the words, for Saul could not see or hear. Saul answered, "I am very distressed. The Philistines make war against me, and GOD has departed from me. I no longer receive answers, neither by prophets, nor by dreams. Therefore I have called you, that you may make known to me what I will do."
So the woman repeated Saul's words, "Why then do you ask of me, since the LORD has departed from you and is with your neighbor? The LORD has done to you as he spoke by me. The LORD has torn the kingdom out of your hand, and given it to David. Because you did not obey the voice of the LORD to defend Israel against its enemies, therefore the LORD has done this thing to you this day. And you have done what you ought not to do, and instead attacked David his anointed. Therefore, the LORD will deliver Israel also with you into the hand of the Philistines, and you and your sons will be punished. The LORD will deliver the army of Israel also into the hand of the Philistines." But Saul worried for his sons, for he had asked David not to harm them. But Samuel said through the woman, "What you ask is not David's to give. Your sons are to be punished as well as you, as the LORD says."[377]
At these words, Saul was terrified, and he swooned because of the words of Samuel. There was no strength left in him, for he had eaten no bread all the day nor the night before. And the woman's trance receded and her eyes were unclouded, for she saw Samuel no more.[378] And she saw Saul, and how between shock and lack of nourishment, he had become unconscious. The woman said to him, "I listened to your voice, and I have put my life in my hand. Now therefore, please listen also to me, and let me set food before you. You must eat, so that you may have strength when you go on your way."
But when Saul woke, he refused to eat. But the woman pressed him, and he listened to her voice. So he arose and sat upright in the bed. And the woman found a fatted calf and killed it, and she took flour and kneaded it into unleavened bread. She brought it before Saul, and they ate. Then he rose up, and went away that night. And no harm came to the woman.

CHAPTER 28

The Philistines gathered together all their armies, and the Israelites camped by the spring which is in Jezreel. The lords of the Philistines passed on by thousands, and David and his men passed went in the rear of the army with Achish. Then the leaders of the Philistines said, "What about these Hebrews?" And Achish said to the leaders of the Philistines, "This is David, who has been with me, and I have found no fault in him since he defected to me until this day?"
But the leaders of the Philistines were angry with him, and said to him, "Make the man return to his place where you have appointed him, and let him not go down with us to battle, lest in the battle he become an adversary to us. For with what should this fellow reconcile himself to his lord? Should it

---

[376] Originally, he brought two servants, but it seems improbable that they would want to do this, and it adds little to the story except to give him an excuse to ignore the woman.
[377] There is a passage above where Saul makes David swear that he will not hurt his descendants. But I do not approve of a people who make promises then break them. So I'm treating this promise as though it was not valid to make. Seven of Saul's descendants are later killed because of his actions against Gibeon. This was after Saul had died, but it doesn't excuse the breaking of a vow, so we're instead giving the decision to GOD.
[378] Mediums and summoners are both mentioned. A summoner sends spirits into this world, whereas mediums see visions of the other world. So she was in a trance all this time.

not be with the heads of these men? Is not this David, of who they sang one to another in dances, saying, 'Saul has slain his thousands, David his ten thousands?'"
Then Achish called David, and said to him, "As the LORD lives, you have been upright, and I have not found evil in you since the day of your coming to me. Nevertheless, the lords do not favor you. Therefore now return, and go in peace, that you not displease the lords of the Philistines." David said to Achish, "But what have I done? What have you found, that I may not go and fight against the enemies of my lord the king?" Achish answered David, "I know that you are good in my sight. Nevertheless, the leaders of the Philistines fear you will stand against us in battle. Therefore, in the morning, you will wake early in the morning, and leave to where you are needed to be. Never mind their remarks, I am satisfied with you."
So David rose up early with his men to depart, in hopes of returning to the land of the Philistines. But when David and his men had come to Ziklag on the third day, Amalek had made a raid on the Negev. And David found he couldn't return there, for it was destroyed by fire. And the women and children were taken captive. They did not kill any, but carried them off, and went their way. So when David and his men came to the city, he found it desolate and burned to to crisp.
David and the people who were with him lifted up their voice and wept, until they had no more power to weep.
And David's two wives were also taken captive, Ahinoam the Jezreelite and Abigail the wife of Nabal the Carmelite. So David was greatly distressed. Even worse, the people spoke of stoning him, because the soul of every man grieved for his sons and for his daughters. But David strengthened himself in the LORD his GOD. So David said to Abiathar the priest, the son of Ahimelech, "Please bring me here the ephod." Abiathar brought the ephod to David.
David inquired of the LORD, saying, "If I pursue after this troop, will I overtake them?" The LORD answered him through the ephod, "Yes."[379] David knew he should pursue, for he would surely overtake them and recover all. So David went with the six hundred men who were with him, and came to the Wadi Besor. But two hundred were so faint that they couldn't cross the Wadi Besor, so they stayed behind. These found an Egyptian in the field, and brought him to David. And he gave him bread, and he ate. Likewise, they gave him water to drink. He also had a piece of a cake of figs, and two clusters of raisins. When he had eaten, his spirit came again to him, for he had neither drunk nor eaten for three days and three nights.
Then David asked him, "To who do you belong? Where are you from?" He said, "I am a young man of Egypt, a servant to an Amalekite. My master left me, because three days ago I fell sick. We made a raid on the Negev of the Kerethites, and on that which belongs to Judah, and on the Negev of Caleb. Then we burned Ziklag with fire." David asked him, "Will you bring me down to this troop?" The man said, "Swear to me by GOD that you will neither kill me, nor deliver me up into the hands of my master, and I will bring you down to this troop." And he swore to him, and went his way after telling David.
When David went where he was shown, he saw that they were spread around over all the ground. They were eating, drinking, and dancing, because of all the great spoil that they had taken out of the land of the Philistines and the land of Judah. David attacked at twilight until the evening of the next day, and he put all the Amalekites to death. Not a man of them escaped from there, except four hundred young men, who rode on camels and fled. He recovered all that the Amalekites had taken, and David rescued his two wives. There was nothing lacking to them, neither small nor great, neither sons nor daughters, neither spoil, nor anything that they had taken to them. David brought back all. He took all the flocks and the herds, which they drove before those other livestock, and said, "This is David's spoil."[380]
David returned to the two hundred men, who were so faint that they could not follow David, who he also had made to stay at the Wadi Besor. They went forth to meet David, and to meet the people who

[379] The ephod had a number of colored stones, and was believed to facilitate determining Urim and Thummim, yes or no answers.
[380] Here is a good indicator that GOD was angry at Saul not because of the Amalekites but because of his failure to obey. He takes all spoils and lets them escape, yet David is not punished at all for this. Ultimately, the Amalekites do not matter. It is just that Saul's heart is not attuned to GOD.

were with him. And when David came near to the people, he greeted them.
But some of the men who had gone with David answered grumbled, "Because they did not go with us, we will not give them anything of the spoil that we have recovered, except to each man his wife and his children. Let them take them, and depart." However, David said, "It was not what we did in this battle. This was won by what the LORD has given to us, for he has preserved us and delivered the raiding party into our hand. These men are not inferior to you. You fought in battle, and they watched the supplies. They will share alike." And he made this policy a statute and an ordinance for Israel.
When David came to Ziklag, he sent of the spoil to the elders of Judah and to his friends, saying, "A present for you of the spoil of the enemies of the LORD." He sent it also to those who were in Bethel, Ramath Negev, Jattir, Aroer, Siphmoth, Eshtemoa, Racal, in the cities of the Jerahmeelites, in the cities of the Kenizzites. Hormah, Bor Ashan, Athach, Hebron, and to all the places where David himself and his men used to stay.
As for the Philistines, they fought against Israel, and the men of Israel fled from before the Philistines. And they were slain on Mount Gilboa. The Philistines followed hard on Saul and on his sons, and they killed his sons Jonathan, Abinadab, and Malkishua. And the archers also wounded Saul. So Saul said to his armor bearer, "Draw your sword, and thrust me through with it, lest these uncircumcised come and torture me before my death." But his armor bearer would not, so Saul took his sword and fell on it. When his armor bearer saw that Saul was dead, he likewise fell on his sword, and died with him. So that day, all of them died together.
When the men of Israel their own armies had fled and that Saul was dead with his sons, they abandoned their cities and fled. After that, the Philistines came and lived in their town. The next day, the Philistines came to strip the slain, and they found Saul and his three sons fallen on Mount Gilboa. So they cut off his head, stripped off his armor, and sent his body into the land of the Philistines all around. They carried the news to their idols, and to their people. They put his armor in the house of Ishtar and they fastened his body to the wall of Beth Shan. But when the inhabitants of Jabesh Gilead heard what the Philistines had done to Saul, all the valiant men arose and traveled all night, and took the body of Saul and the bodies of his sons from the wall of Beth Shan, and brought them to Jabesh and burnt them there. They took their bones, buried them under the tamarisk tree in Jabesh, and fasted seven days.

DAVID

CHAPTER 1

After the death of Saul, David returned from the slaughter of the Amalekites, and he stayed two days in Ziklag. On the third day, that, a man came out of the camp from Saul, with his clothes torn and dirt on his head. And when he came to David that he fell to the ground and paid homage. David asked him, "Where do you come from?" He said to him, "I have escaped out of the camp of Israel." So David asked him, "How did it go? Please tell me." He answered, "The people have fled from the battle, and many of the people also have fallen and are dead. Saul and his son Jonathan are dead also." David said to the young man who had told him this, "How do you know that Saul and Jonathan his son are dead?" The young man said, "I happened to be on Mount Gilboa and saw Saul leaning on his spear. And the chariots and the horsemen were closing in on him. And I saw him beg for his shield bearer to kill him. But he could not go through with it, so Saul fell on his sword. The shield bearer also killed himself after this."[381]
Then David took hold on his clothes, and tore them; and likewise all the men who were with him. They mourned and fasted until evening for Saul and his son Jonathan, and for all the people of the LORD in the house of Israel, because they had fallen by the sword.
David asked the young man, "Where are you from?" He answered, "I am the son of a foreigner, an Amalekite." David said to him, "How is it that you were not afraid to destroy the LORD's anointed?" He struck him, so that he died.
David said to the corpse, "Your blood be on your head, for your mouth has testified against you, 'I

[381] The original text has a back and forth where he asks an Amalekite to kill him, but this is not consistent with previous writing, where Saul instead falls on his sword.

have slain the LORD's anointed.'" And David lamented with this lamentation over Saul and over Jonathan his son, and said it should be taught to the people of Judah. It is written in the book of Jashar,

> *Your glory, Israel, is slain on your high places. How the mighty have fallen. Do not tell it in Gath. Do not publish it in the streets of Ashkelon, lest the daughters of the Philistines rejoice, lest the daughters of the uncircumcised triumph. You mountains of Gilboa, let there be no dew nor rain on you, nor fields of offerings. For there the shield of the mighty was vilely cast away. The shield of Saul was not anointed with oil. From the blood of the slain, from the fat of the mighty, Jonathan's bow did not turn back. Saul's sword did not return empty. Saul and Jonathan, beloved and lovely, not separated. Lovely in their life, and in their death they were not separated. They were swifter than eagles. They were stronger than lions. You daughters of Israel, weep over Saul, who clothed you luxuriously in scarlet, who put ornaments of gold on your clothing. How are the mighty fallen in the midst of the battle. Jonathan is slain on your high places. I grieve for you, my brother Jonathan. You have been very pleasant to me. Your love for me was a wonder, more than the love of women. How are the mighty fallen, and the weapons of war perished.*

In this way, David mourned over Saul and Jonathan.

CHAPTER 2

After this, David inquired of the LORD, "Will I go up into any of the cities of Judah?" The LORD said to him, "Yes." David asked, "Where?" GOD said, "You will go to Hebron." So David went there with his two wives Ahinoam and Abigail, and he also took his men and his household. And they lived in Hebron. Then men of Judah came, and these men anointed David king over the house of Judah. They told David, saying, "It was the people of Jabesh Gilead who buried Saul."[382]

So David sent messengers to Jabesh Gilead, and he said to its people, "Blessed are you by the LORD, because you have shown this kindness to your lord, Saul, in burying him. Now may the LORD show kindness and truth to you. I also will reward you for this kindness, because you have done this thing. Your hands will be strong and your hearts will be valiant. And the house of Judah has anointed me king over them."

Meanwhile, the son of Ner called Abner was commander of Saul's army, and he had taken the son of Saul named Ishbaal and brought him over to Mahanaim. And he made him king over Gilead, and over the Geshurites, and over Jezreel, and over Ephraim, and over Benjamin, and over all Israel. Ishbaal, Saul's son, was forty years old when he began to reign over Israel, and he reigned two years. But the house of Judah followed David. David was king in Hebron over the house of Judah was seven years and six months.

Abner and the servants of Ishbaal went out from Mahanaim to Gibeon, and Joab the son of Zeruiah and the servants of David went out to meet them by the pool of Gibeon. They sat down, the one group on the one side of the pool, and the other on the other side of the pool. Then Abner said to Joab, "Let the young men now arise and compete before us." Joab said, "Let them compete." So each arose and went over, with twelve of the sons of Ishbaal and twelve of the servants of David. And they caught their opponent by the head and thrust their swords in each other's side, and they fell down together. Therefore that place was called Field of Blades in Gibeon, because the battle was very severe that day. But ultimately, Abner and the men of Israel were defeated by the servants of David.

The three sons of Zeruiah were there, Joab, Abishai, and Asahel. Asahel was as quick on his feet, and chased after Abner. And he would not be distracted by anything. And Abner tried to tell him things to make him turn his head to look away, but Asahel refused to stop. So Abner with the back end of his spear struck Asahel in the body, and the back of the spear tore through and out the other side. Asahel fell down there, and died in the same place. And all who came to the place where Asahel had died, stopped there and looked.

But Joab and Abishai pursued after Abner until the sun went down at the hill of Ammah, near the wilderness of Gibeon. The sons of Benjamin gathered themselves together and formed a single group, and stood on the top of a hill. Then Abner called to Joab, "Will your sword pursue forever? How long

[382] The first chapter seemed inconsistent, but this detail tracks with previous writing.

will it be then, before you ask the people to stop pursuing their brothers?" But Joab said, "As the LORD lives, if you had not spoken, surely the people would not have given up the pursuit of their brothers until the morning." So Joab blew the trumpet; and all the people stopped fighting.
As for Abner, he continued his journey all that night through the Arabah, and they passed over the Jordan, then marched the whole morning until they came to Mahanaim. Joab returned from pursuing Abner[383] and took up Asahel, and buried him in the tomb of his father, which was in Bethlehem. Joab and his men went all night, and the day broke on them at Hebron.

CHAPTER 3

There had been a long war between the house of Saul and the house of David. But now David grew stronger and stronger, while the house of Saul grew weaker and weaker. And sons were born to David in Hebron. And his firstborn was Amnon (from Ahinoam), the second was Daluiah (from Abigail), the third was Absalom (the son of Maacah, the daughter of Talmai), the fourth was Adonijah (the son of Haggith), and the fifth was Shephatiah (of Abital), and the sixth was Ithream (of Eglah). These were born to David in Hebron.
And while Saul still lived, there was war between the house of Saul and the house of David, and Abner was gaining power in the house of Saul. And Saul had a secondary wife, named Rizpah, who was the daughter of Aiah. And Ishbaal accused Abner, "Why have you gone in to my father's secondary wife?" Then Abner was very angry over the words of Ishbaal, and said, "Until today, is it for myself that I have been doing all these things, showing loyalty to the house of Saul your father, to his brothers, and to his friends. Have not delivered you into the hand of David? And yet you charge me this day with a fault concerning this woman. GOD do so to me, if as the LORD has sworn to David, I do not do even so to him, and transfer the kingdom from the house of Saul and set up the throne of David over Israel." And Ishbaal could not answer Abner another word, because he feared him. So Abner sent messengers to David on his behalf, "Whose is the land?" and saying, "Make your alliance with me, and my hand will be with you, to bring all Israel around to you."
And David said, "I will make a covenant with you, but one thing I require of you. You will not see my face unless you first bring Mikal, Saul's daughter, when you come to see me next."
David likewise sent messengers to Ishbaal, "Give me my wife Mikal, who I betrothed to myself for one hundred foreskins of the Philistines." And seeing that Abner was in competition with him, Ishbaal immediately took her from her husband Paltiel the son of Laish, and send her to David. Her husband Paltiel went with her, weeping as he went, and followed her to Bahurim. There, Abner met both of them, and he said to Paltiel, "Go. Return to your land." So he returned.
Abner advised the elders of Israel, saying, "For some time you have wanted David to be king over you. Now then do it, for the LORD has spoken of David, saying, 'By the hand of David, I will save my people Israel out of the hand of the Philistines, and out of the hand of all their enemies.'"
And Abner also spoke privately to the sons of Benjamin. And Abner also spoke privately to David in Hebron all that seemed good to Israel, and to the whole house of Benjamin. So Abner came to David to Hebron, and twenty men with him, and Mikal was given to David. So David made Abner and the men who were with him a feast. Then Abner said to David, "I will arise and go, and will gather all Israel to my lord the king, that they may make a covenant with you, and that you may reign over all that you desire."
After this, David sent Abner away; and he left in peace. Now, the servants of David and Joab were returning from a raid, and brought in a great spoil with them. But Abner was not with David in Hebron, for he had sent him away, and he left in peace. When Joab and all the army who was with him had come, they told Joab, saying, "Abner the son of Ner came to David, and he has sent him away, and he left in peace." But Joab came to the king and asked him, "What have you done? Abner came to you. Why is it that you have sent him away? Now he has gone. Surely Abner is evil, and he came to deceive you, and to know your going out and your coming in, and to know all that you do." And suspicion ruled Joab's heart.
So after Joab had left David, he sent messengers after Abner, and they brought him back from the well

[383] A section after this compares the deaths of Abner's people with the others. Except to show GOD's favor, this is an irrelevant detail. It was basically nineteen on one side, except for Asahel, and about three hundred on the other side.

of Sirah without David's knowledge. Abner returned to Hebron, and Joab took him aside into the midst of the gate to speak with him quietly. And there, he struck him there in the abdomen in revenge for the blood of Asahel his brother. And Abner's blood ran in the street.
When David heard it, he said, "I and my kingdom are guiltless before the LORD of the blood of Abner. Let it be on the head of Joab, and on all his father's house. And if the LORD disapproves, let there never fail to be any from the house of Joab those who have an issue, who are lepers, who leans on a staff from lameness, who lacks bread, or who falls by the sword." And David sent word to Joab about his actions, telling him, "Tear your clothes, and clothe yourselves with sackcloth, and mourn before Abner." And King David followed the coffin of Abner.
When they buried Abner in Hebron, the king lifted up his voice, and wept at the grave of Abner. And all the people also wept. And the king lamented for Abner, "Should Abner die as a fool dies? Your hands were not bound in chains, your feet were not put into fetters. As a man falls before the ruthless, so you fell." All the people wept again over him.
Then all the people came to persuade David to eat bread while it was yet day; but David refused, "GOD do so to me, and more also, if I taste bread, or anything else, until the sun goes down."
When the people took notice of it, it pleased them, so all the people and all Israel understood that day that David had not killed Abner. And they also mourned greatly. David said to his servants, "Do you not realize that a leader and a great man has fallen this day in Israel? Even though I am anointed king, all it took to make me weak was going without food. And these men, the sons of Zeruiah, are too brutal for me. Today I will rest, but I pray: may the LORD reward the evildoer according to his wickedness."

CHAPTER 4

Now when Ishbaal heard that Abner was dead in Hebron, he lost courage, and all Israel was troubled. And Ishbaal had two men who were captains of bands. One of these was Baanah and the other Rechab, and they were of the people of Benjamin.
And Jonathan, Saul's son who was killed with his father, had a son whose feet were crippled. He was five years old when the news came of Saul and Jonathan dying, so his nurse took him up and fled. And as she was hurrying to get away, he fell and was injured. And this son's name was Mippibaal. And the two vowed revenge or something.[384]
So Rechab and Baanah, the sons of Rimmon the Beerothite, came about the heat of the day to the house of Ishbaal, as he was resting at noon. The doorkeeper of the house had been sifting wheat, and she became drowsy and fell asleep from the monotony of the work, so Rechab and his brother Baanah slipped by. And they went into the house where he was lying on his bed in his bedchamber. And they struck him and killed Ishbaal. And they beheaded him, and took his head and went by the way of the Arabah all night. They brought the head of Ishbaal to David at Hebron and said to the king, "The head of Ishbaal, the son of Saul, your enemy, who sought your life. The LORD has avenged my lord the king this day of Saul and his descendants." And they boasted of the event.
David said to them, "As the LORD lives, who has redeemed me out of all adversity, when someone last told me, 'Saul is dead,' thinking to have brought good news, I took hold of him, and killed him in Ziklag. How much more, when wicked men have slain a righteous person in his own house on his bed, and show his head to me, will I not now require his blood of your hand and take him away from Earth?" So David sent his guards, and they killed the two men, and cut off their hands and their feet, and hanged them up beside the pool in Hebron. And they took the head of Ishbaal, and buried it in the grave of Abner in Hebron.

CHAPTER 5

Then all the tribes of Israel came to David at Hebron, saying, "We are your bone and your flesh. In times past, when Saul was king over us, it was you who led out and brought in Israel. The LORD said to you, 'You will be shepherd of my people Israel, and you will be ruler over Israel.'"
All the elders of Israel came to the king to Hebron, and King David made a covenant with them in Hebron before the LORD. Then they anointed David king over Israel. David was thirty years old when he began to reign, and he reigned forty years.

---

[384] Some of these deaths are pointless. Hence the "or something."

The king and his men went to Jerusalem against the Jebusites, who said to David, "You will not come in here, but the blind and the lame will repel you," and also, "David can't come in here." And he took it by force; henceforth, the city of Jerusalem to this day is known as the City of David. And David said on that day, "Whoever strikes the Jebusites, let him get up to the watercourse, and strike the lame and the blind, those who hate the soul of David." Therefore they say, "The blind and the lame can't come into the palace." David lived in the stronghold, and called it the City of David. And he built a city all around from the Millo and inward. David grew greater and greater, for the LORD of hosts was with him.

The king of Tyre (a man named Hiram) sent messengers to David. And Hiram respected David, and he brought cedar trees, craftsmen of wood, and masons of walls. And these built David a palace. But these free masons[385] had no love of GOD, their city was built as a favor to the mermaid Tyros, and they were tyrants,[386] loving power more than justice or truth. Their desire was that David would become weak from soft living, and that perhaps another country could take over Israel. With this and other schemes, these free masons plotted against Israel to this day. Then David had a majestic palace built through the charity of the wicked.[387] So it was that GOD intended a palace for David, and used people of dubious intentions to build it.

And through this, David knew that the LORD had established him king over Israel and that he had exalted his kingdom for his people Israel's sake. So David took more secondary wives and wives out of Jerusalem, after he had come from Hebron. And each of these gave to David more sons and daughters: Shammua, Shobab, Nathan and Solomon, Ibhar, Elishua, Eliphelet, Nogah, Nepheg, Japhia, Elishama, Baaliada, and Eliphelet.

The Philistines heard that David had been anointed king over Israel, all the Philistines went up to seek against David. David heard of it, and went down into the stronghold. Then the Philistines came and spread out in the Valley of Rephaim. And David asked the LORD, "Will I go up against the Philistines? Will you deliver them into my hand?" The LORD said to David, "Go up; for I will certainly deliver the Philistines into your hand." So David came to their encampment, and struck them there. He said of this, "The LORD has broken through my enemies before me, like a breakthrough of waters." Therefore he called the name of that place Baal Perazim. And they abandoned their idols there, and David and his men took them away.

The Philistines came up yet again, and went to the same valley. David asked the LORD again, "Will I go up against the Philistines?" But this time, the LORD said to him, "You will not go up. Circle around behind them, and attack them opposite the balsam trees. When you hear the sound of marching in the tops of the balsam trees, then you are to act decisively; for then the LORD has gone out before you to strike the army of the Philistines." David did so, as the LORD commanded him, and struck the Philistines down again.

CHAPTER 6

And David again gathered together thirty thousand of the chosen men of Israel. And he awakened from sleep, and went with all the people who were with him to Kiriath Jearim in Judah. And he retrieved from there the ark of GOD's covenant. And they set the ark of GOD on a new cart, and brought it out of the house of Abinadab that was on the hill. And Uzza and Ahio,the sons of Abinadab, guided the cart with the ark; and Ahio was walking in front of the ark. And David and all the children of Israel played before the LORD with all their strength and with songs, and with harps, and with stringed instruments, and with tambourines, and with castanets, and with cymbals.

And when they came to the threshing floor of Nodan, Uzza reached out his hand to the ark of GOD, and took hold of it. For the cattle stumbled, and the ark was in danger of toppling. And Uzza was very strong and tried to lift it, but Uzza was not worthy to touch it. So the anger of the LORD was

---

[385] Making a link between Freemasonic cults and enmity to GOD, as Freemasonry has never been an actual friend of Judaism or Christianity, and frequently supports open borders against the safety of the people of GOD. They also worship the demon Baphomet.

[386] This is a punny word, making tyrant out of Tyre. As far as I know, there is no connection.

[387] The "charity of the wicked" is a phrase that I use for when GOD allows wicked people to do nice things for selfish reasons. For example, if a big company wants to benefit on reputation, and donates their discard food, good people make good on what they consider junk.

kindled against Uzza, and GOD struck him there for his error. And immediately, he died before GOD. And David was upset by this display, and he called that place Perez Uzza.[388] And David was afraid of the LORD that day, and he said, "How can the ark of GOD come to me? I am not worthy of the LORD." Now the ark of the LORD arrived, but David was not willing to move the ark of the LORD with him to the City of David, so David diverted it to the house of Obed-Edom the Gathite. And the ark of the LORD remained in the house of Obed-Edom the Gathite three months, and the LORD blessed Obed-Edom and all his house. Eventually David was told, "Look, the LORD has blessed the house of Obed-Edom and all that belongs to him because of the ark of GOD." And David said, "I will bring back the ark then, so that I might also have the blessing to my house." And David went and brought up the ark of the LORD from the house of Obed-Edom into the City of David with joy.
So David took the ark, and those carrying it sacrificed an ox and a fattened calf before they had gone even six steps. And David danced before the LORD with all his might; and David was clothed in a linen ephod. So David and all the house of Israel brought up the ark of the LORD with shouting, and with the sound of the trumpet. But as the ark of the LORD was entering into the City of David, Mikal his first wife looked out at the window, and saw King David leaping and dancing before the LORD. And she despised him in her heart, for she was jealous of his affection for the LORD. They brought in the ark of the LORD, and set it in its place in the midst of the tent that David had set up for it. Then David offered burnt offerings and peace offerings before the LORD. And when David had offered the burnt offering and the peace offerings, he blessed the people in the name of the LORD of hosts. And David gave a portion of bread, a date cake, and a raisin cake to the whole multitude of Israel, both men and women. So all the people departed everyone to his house.
After that, David returned to bless his own household. But Mikal came out to meet David, and her first words to him where, "Is this how the King of Israel behaves?!? Are you not ashamed parading about uncovered? You were dancing like some vain man in the eyes of the handmaids and the servants." And David said to Mikal, "What good is shame? Should I worry about reputation before the LORD? Should I be ashamed of him?!?"[389] And he continued, "I was dancing before the LORD. Blessed be the LORD, who chose me above your father and above all his house, to appoint me prince over the people of the LORD and over Israel; therefore, I will celebrate before the LORD. Do you think I am shameless? Then I will be yet more shameless than this, and I will be lowly and vile in your eyes. But of the handmaids of who you have spoken, they will honor me. Let the LORD determine whether you or I have done right in his eyes." And Mikal had no child to the day of her death, for the LORD made her barren.

CHAPTER 7

While the king lived in his house, the LORD had given him rest from all his enemies all around, and David began to have more time on his hands than was good for him. So he came to Nathan the prophet, "I have been thinking. I dwell in a house of cedar, but the ark of GOD dwells within curtains. Shouldn't the LORD also be made a house worthy of the one he has given me?"
Nathan said to David, "The LORD is with you and your heart is kind, I am sure he will not object." And Nathan returned to his house to sleep for the night. But that night, that the word of the LORD came to Nathan, "Will David build me a house for me to dwell in? What for?!? I have not lived in a house since the day that I brought up the children of Israel out of Egypt. I have vowed to travel with them, and have been moved around in a tent and in a tabernacle. In all places in which I have walked throughout Israel, did I ever say one word to any of the judges of Israel, who I commanded to be shepherd of my people Israel, asking them, 'Why have you not built me a house of cedar?'[390] Now therefore you will tell David this, 'I took you from the sheep pen, from following the sheep, that you should be prince over my people Israel. I have been with you wherever you went, and have cut off all

---

[388] Perez means "to break" and Uzza means "might" so this effectively means the breaking of might.
[389] One of the teachings of the Bible is that morality and shame are not necessarily the same thing. There are sinful people who appear shameless. But there are also those who are so ashamed that they are not able to worship because "What would people think?" So the Bible says, "Those who are ashamed of me before others, I will be ashamed of."
[390] GOD doesn't need, or even want a temple. GOD travels with his people. In fact, the Herod's temple is an idol that later is shown distancing the Jews from GOD in the New Testament. They are fixated with sacrifices, and JESUS has to tell them they've neglected the widows and the orphans.

your enemies from before you. I will make you a great name, like the name of the great ones who are in Earth. I will appoint a place for my people Israel, and will plant them, that they may dwell in their own place. Neither will the children of wickedness afflict them, and from the time that I commanded judges to be over my people Israel. I will cause you to rest from all your enemies. Moreover the LORD tells you that he will build you a house. And it will come about when your days are fulfilled, and you sleep with your fathers, that I will raise up your descendant after you, who will come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. He will build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever.[391] I will be his father, and he will be my son. If he commits iniquity, I will chasten him with a human rod, and with the stripes from human beings; but my loving kindness I will not take from him, as I took it from Saul, who I put away before you. And your house and your kingdom will be made sure forever before me, and your throne will be established forever.'"
According to all these words, and according to all this vision, so Nathan spoke to David.
Then King David went in and sat before the LORD and praised him, "Who am I, LORD GOD, and what is my house, that you have brought me thus far? This was a small thing in your eyes, LORD GOD, and you have spoken of my house for a great while to come, and you have let me look upon the generation of humankind to come, LORD GOD. And what more can David add to you concerning the honor which is done to me? For you know that I am yours, LORD. According to your own heart, you have worked all this greatness in my witnessing. Therefore you are great, LORD GOD. For there is none like you, neither is there any GOD besides you, according to all that we have heard with our ears. And who is like your people Israel, the one nation on Earth who GOD went out to redeem to be a people for himself, to do great and awesome deeds by driving out a nation and its gods before your people, who you redeemed for yourself from Egypt? You became their GOD and LORD, to be your people forever for yourself and your people Israel. Now, LORD GOD, the word that you have spoken concerning me and concerning my house, confirm it forever and do as you have spoken. Let your name be magnified forever, saying, 'The LORD of hosts is the GOD of Israel.' For you have revealed to me, saying, 'I will build you a house.' Therefore I have found in my heart to pray this prayer to you. Now, O LORD GOD, you are GOD, and your words are truth, and you have promised this good thing."

CHAPTER 8

Now after David had struck the Philistines, he took the bridle of Ammah from them. He likewise attacked Moab, and when they were defeated, he cut a three lines with rope. Then he had them lie down, and those where within the line, he spared as servants, but those who went over to the other two line were killed. So it was that the surviving people of Moab paid tribute to David. David also attacked Hadadezer, king of Zobah, as he went to recover his dominion at the Euphrates River. And David took from him a thousand of his chariots, and seven thousand horsemen, and twenty thousand footmen. David hamstrung all the chariot horses, except among them for one hundred chariots.
When the Arameans of Damascus came to help Hadadezer king of Zobah, David struck of the Arameans twenty-two thousand men. Then David put garrisons in Aram of Damascus, and the Arameans became servants to David and brought tribute. The LORD gave victory to David wherever he went.
And David took the shields of gold that were on the servants of Hadadezer, and brought them to Jerusalem (later on, these shields were taken by Shishak, the king of Egypt, in the days of Solomon's son Rehoboam, when he lost them from being conquered). From Tebah and from Berothai, cities of Hadadezer, King David took a very great amount of bronze.
When Toi king of Hamath heard that David had struck all the army of Hadadezer, then Toi sent Hadoram his son to King David, to greet him, and to bless him, because he had fought against Hadadezer and struck him, for Hadadezer had wars with Toi. For the enemy of his enemy, he considered a friend. And he brought with him vessels of silver, and vessels of gold, and vessels of bronze. King David dedicated these to the LORD along with the silver and gold that he dedicated of all

[391] The interpretation of this passage is often that David wasn't virtuous enough to build the temple. But it was more like this: David had a personal relationship with GOD beyond things. He had fame, wealth, and power but GOD was still more dear to him. The temple was just an object, so he wasn't the one to build it. It was a vanity project for a "wise" man like Solomon. Solomon's wisdom was mostly alleged. GOD granted him wisdom, but he was a harsh man, as mentioned later. Also, this passage could apply to JESUS not Solomon, which is possibly why his temple failed.

the nations which he subdued: of Edom, Moab, Ammon, the Philistines, Amalek, and the spoil of Hadadezer.
And David made a name for himself when he returned from these conquests. And Abishai son of Zeruiah also defeated the Edomites in the Valley of Salt, where eighteen thousand opposed him. And he put a garrison in Edom, and all the Edomites became servants to David. The LORD gave victory to David wherever he went.
So David reigned over all Israel, and David executed justice and righteousness to all his people. And he was able to reign effectively because GOD was at his side, and many assistants were chosen to help him: Joab the son of Zeruiah was over the army, Jehoshaphat the son of Ahilud was recorder, Zadok the son of Ahitub and Ahimelech the son of Abiathar were priests, Shisha was scribe, Benaiah the son of Jehoiada was over the Cherethites and the Pelethites, and David's sons were chief ministers.[392]

CHAPTER 9

And David felt sad for the house of Saul, and asked after it, "Is there yet any who is left of the house of Saul, that I may show him kindness?" And he was told there was a servant whose name was Ziba, and she was summoned to David. The king asked him, "Are you Ziba?" He said, "This is correct." So David asked, "Is anyone left in the house of Saul? I wish to show the kindness of GOD to him." And David meant it, for many of his servants had killed the children of Saul in order to secure him power, and he deeply missed Saul and Jonathan.
Ziba said to the king, "Jonathan has yet a son, who is lame of his feet." David asked him, "Where is he?" Ziba said to David, "He is in the house of Makir the son of Ammiel, in Lo Debar." Then David fetched him. And Mippibaal, the son of Jonathan, came to David. And he fell on his face and showed respect. David said, "Mippibaal." He answered, "Here I am." And David said to him, "Do not be afraid, for I will surely show you kindness for Jonathan your father's sake, and will restore to you all the land of Saul your grandfather. You will eat bread at my table continually." Mippibaal asked, "Why is it that you should look on such a dead dog as I am? Why should you take pity on one such as me?" But David could not answer.
Instead, he called to Ziba, and said to him, "All that pertained to Saul and to all his house have I given to your master's son. I would like you to till the land for him, you and your sons, and you will bring food into your master's house that they may eat. But Mippibaal your master's son will eat bread always at my table." Now Ziba had fifteen sons and twenty servants. And all of them were put to work at this task. Ziba said to the king, "According to all that you command, so I will do." So Mippibaal ate at David's table like one of the king's sons. Mippibaal had a young son, whose name was Micah. All that lived in the house of Ziba were servants to Mippibaal. So Mippibaal lived in Jerusalem, and he ate continually at the king's table. He was lame in both his feet, but David did not mind.

CHAPTER 10

After this, the king of the people of Ammon died, and Hanun his son reigned in his place. And David said, "I will show kindness to Hanun the son of Nahash, because his father showed kindness to me." So David sent his servants to comfort him concerning his father. And they came into the land of Ammon. But the leaders in Ammon said to Hanun, "Do you really think that David honors your father, and has sent comforters to you? We think these are spies, seeking to overthrow this land!" So Hanun took David's servants and shaved off their beards, and cut off their garments in the middle down to their buttocks, and sent them away. The David heard what had been done. And he said, "Wait at Jericho until your beards have grown, and then return."
When the people of Ammon saw that David hated them, they hired the Arameans of Beth Rehob and the Arameans of Zobah (twenty thousand footmen), the people of Maacah (one thousand men), and the men of Tob (twelve thousand men).
David heard they were assembling against him, so he sent Joab and all his army of the mighty men. Then the people of Ammon came out, and put the battle in array at the entrance of the gate. So it was that the Arameans of Zobah and of Rehob were with the men of Tob and Maacah in the field. Now

[392] This passage is important because it emphasizes that no man, especially not a ruler, is an island. Trump's first presidency was a godsend, but now between paranoia and trying to do everything himself, he is basically is losing touch with his base. Most recently, his attitude was that he got her alone.

Joab saw that the battle was set against him before and behind, so he chose of all the choice men of Israel and put them in array against the Arameans. The rest of the people he committed into the hand of Abishai his brother; and he put them in array against the people of Ammon. He said to his brother, "If the Arameans are too strong for me, then you will help me; but if the people of Ammon are too strong for you, then I will come and help you. Let us be courageous, and let us be strong for our people, and for the cities of our GOD. And the LORD do that which seems good to him."
So Joab and the people who were with him drew near to the battle against the Arameans: and they fled before him. When the people of Ammon saw that the Arameans had fled, they likewise fled before Abishai, and entered into the city. Then Joab returned from the people of Ammon, and came to Jerusalem. When the Arameans saw that they were defeated by the children of Israel, they gathered themselves together.
It was told David; and he gathered all Israel together, and passed over the Jordan, and came to Helam, where Arameans had fled to. The Arameans set themselves against David, and fought with him. But David killed of the Arameans seven hundred charioteers, and forty thousand foot soldiers, and struck Shobach the captain of their army, so the the Arameans fled before Israel. After that, when all the kings of the Arameans saw that they were defeated before Israel, they made peace with Israel, and served them. And after that, the Arameans feared to help the people of Ammon any more.

CHAPTER 11

It was the time of year when kings go out to war, and David sent Joab and his servants with him. They had destroyed the people of Ammon, and besieged Rabbah. But David stayed at Jerusalem.[393] One night, David woke up early (for the rich food and soft living of a king did not agree with his stomach), and he walked to the roof of the king's house. Now David saw the scenic overlook of the city, and the grandeur of Jerusalem. And David saw the skyline that GOD had created, for the night sky was very beautiful that night. But another sort of scenery drew his attention instead, and David forgot about the LORD for a moment of weakness. David instead saw a woman bathing, and the woman was very beautiful in appearance.

David sent and asked his servants the next day, "Who lives in this house?" One servant said, "Isn't this the home of Uriah the Hethite? I believe he is a very accomplished and loyal soldier, and he has cattle, sheep, donkeys, and servants of his own. Oh, and he has a wife named Bathsheba, who he loves very much. Why? Has he done something wrong? Uriah has a reputation of being very scrupulous and loyal to duty. Should we send news that he is to be punished?" But David told them, "For now, I was just curious. I will see of his merits myself."
But David could not cease to think about her, and another night while she was bathing (for she was purifying from her uncleanness), he contacted her through other messengers,[394] and he slept with her. After this, she returned to her house. But she became pregnant, and she sent and told David this.

[393] In other words, the cause of this sin in the first place was that he wasn't doing his duty to defend Israel nor claim territory.
[394] For the first messengers might have been suspicious.

David became nervous that his deeds might be exposed, but after some thought, he said to her, "You should also sleep with your husband, then he will consider the child his." Now Bathsheba didn't particularly want to be a one-night stand, but she neither wanted to have her husband leave her, for she also loved him. So she agreed.
So David sent word to Joab and said, "Send me Uriah the Hethite, for I wish to award him for his service." So Joab sent Uriah to him. And David asked Uriah about the condition of Joab, the other men, and of the war. And he said, "All is well." And he began to tell David many military details that he did not really care about. So David said to Uriah, "I have heard that you have done well in combat. Return home and be at ease. Wash yourself and sleep with your wife." And Uriah left the king's presence and a gift was sent after him. But Uriah did not return home, and instead slept among the other men of his unit."
David asked after him, "Did he return to his home and to his wife?" But it was reported to David, "No, Uriah did not go down to his house." So David asked Uriah, "Haven't you come from a journey? Why did you not go down to your house?" Uriah said to David, "The ark, Israel, and Judah, are staying in tents. My leader Joab and the other warriors are camped in the open field. How can I go into my house to eat and to drink? How can I lie with my wife? As the LORD lives and as you live, I will not do this thing."
So David said to Uriah, "Stay here today, and tomorrow I will let you depart." So Uriah stayed in Jerusalem that day. And David fed him food and wine, and he ate and drank until he became drunk. Even so, in the evening he went out and returned to his camp, and did not go down to his house.
In the morning, David wrote a letter to Joab, delivering it by the hand of Uriah. He wrote these words in the letter, «Uriah wishes glory in battle. Place him in the front of our troops, so he will show his valor.»[395] So Joab assigned Uriah to the place where he knew that valiant men were. And the battle raged hot that day, and many died, and Uriah the Hethite was among them.
And a messenger of Joab went to the king in Jerusalem and came and reported to David all that Joab had told him. The messenger said to David, "The men prevailed against us, and came out to us into the field, and we were on them even to the entrance of the gate. And the archers shot from off the wall, and some eighteen men of the king's servants are dead. And Uriah the Hethite is dead also."
Then David said to the messenger, "Thus you will tell Joab, 'Do not let this thing displease you, for the sword devours one as well as another. Make your battle stronger against the city, and overthrow it.' Encourage him. As for Uriah the Hethite, does he have a wife or child?" And the servant told him, "He has a wife but no children, and no brothers to raise up children for him."[396] David said, "Then I will marry her."
So when the wife of Uriah heard that Uriah her husband was dead, she made mourned for her husband. When the mourning was past, David sent and took her home to his house, and she became his wife, and bore him a son. But the thing that David had done displeased the LORD.

CHAPTER 12

The LORD sent Nathan to David. He came to him, and said to him, "There were two men in one city; the one rich, and the other poor.
The rich man had very many flocks and herds,
but the poor man had nothing, except one little ewe lamb, which he had bought and raised. It grew up together with him, and with his children. It ate of his own food, drank of his own cup, and lay in his bosom, and was to him like a daughter.
A traveler came to the rich man, and he spared to take of his own flock and of his own herd, to dress for the wayfaring man who had come to him, but took the poor man's lamb, and dressed it for the man who had come to him."
David's anger was greatly kindled against the man, and he said to Nathan, "As the LORD lives, the man who has done this is worthy to die.
He will restore the lamb fourfold, because he did this thing, and because he had no pity."
Nathan said to David, "You are the man. This is what the LORD, the GOD of Israel, says: 'I anointed

[395] Slightly changed the way this is written, so that Joab isn't complicit in murder, just used by David.
[396] Referring to the Levirite rule of marriage.

you king over Israel, and I delivered you out of the hand of Saul.
I gave you your master's house, and your master's wives into your bosom, and gave you the house of Israel and of Judah; and if that would have been too little, I would have added to you many more such things.
Why have you despised the LORD, to do that which is evil in his sight? You have struck Uriah the Hethite with the sword, and have taken his wife to be your wife, and have slain him with the sword of the people of Ammon.
Now therefore the sword will never depart from your house, because you have despised me, and have taken the wife of Uriah the Hethite to be your wife.'
"This is what the LORD says: 'I will raise up evil against you out of your own house; and I will take your wives before your eyes, and give them to your neighbor, and he will lie with your wives in the sight of this sun.
For you did it secretly, but I will do this thing before all Israel, and before the sun.'"
David said to Nathan, "I have sinned against the LORD." Nathan said to David, "The LORD also has put away your sin. You will not die.
However, because by this deed you have shown utter contempt for the LORD, the child also who is born to you will surely die."
Then Nathan went to his home. And GOD struck the child that Uriah's wife bore to David, and it was very sick.
Then David sought from GOD on behalf of the child. And David fasted, and went in and lay all night on the ground.
And the elders of his house approached him to lift him up from the ground, but he was unwilling, and he would not eat food with them.
It happened on the seventh day, that the child died. The servants of David feared to tell him that the child was dead; for they said, "While the child was yet alive, we spoke to him, and he did not listen to our voice. How will he then harm himself, if we tell him that the child is dead?"
But when David noticed that his servants were whispering together, David perceived that the child was dead; and David said to his servants, "Is the child dead?" They said, "He is dead."
Then David arose from the ground, and washed, and anointed himself, and changed his clothing; and he came into the house of the LORD, and worshiped. Then he went to his own house, and he asked for bread to eat. And they set bread before him, and he ate.
Then his servants said to him, "What is this that you have done? You fasted and wept and kept vigil for the child while he was alive; but when the child was dead, you rose up and ate bread."
He said, "While the child was yet alive, I fasted and wept; for I said, 'Who knows whether the LORD will not be gracious to me, that the child may live?'
But now he is dead, why should I fast? Can I bring him back? I will go to him, but he will not return to me."
David comforted Bathsheba his wife, and went in to her, and lay with her. She bore a son, and he called his name Solomon. The LORD loved him;
and he sent by the hand of Nathan the prophet; and he named him Jedidiah, for the LORD's sake.
Now Joab fought against Rabbah of the people of Ammon, and took the royal city.
Joab sent messengers to David, and said, "I have fought against Rabbah, and have also taken the water supply of the city.
Now therefore gather the rest of the people together, and besiege the city and capture it yourself, or I will capture the city, and it will be named after me."
David gathered all the people together, and went to Rabbah, and fought against it, and took it.
He took the crown of their king from off his head; and its weight was a talent of gold, and in it were precious stones; and it was set on David's head. He brought out the spoil of the city, a very great amount.
He brought out the people who were in it, and put them to work with saws, and iron picks, and iron axes, and to labor at the brick kiln. And he did the same to all the cities of the people of Ammon.
David and all the people returned to Jerusalem.

CHAPTER 13

It happened after this, that Absalom the son of David had a beautiful sister, whose name was Tamar; and Amnon the son of David loved her.

Amnon was so troubled that he fell sick because of his sister Tamar; for she was a virgin; and it seemed hard to Amnon to do anything to her.

But Amnon had a friend, whose name was Jonadab, the son of Shimeah, David's brother. Now Jonadab was very crafty.

He said to him, "Why, son of the king, are you so sad from day to day? Won't you tell me?" Amnon said to him, "I love Tamar, my brother Absalom's sister."

Jonadab said to him, "Lie down on your bed, and pretend to be sick. When your father comes to see you, tell him, 'Please let my sister Tamar come and give me bread to eat, and dress the food in my sight, that I may see it, and eat it from her hand.'"

So Amnon lay down and faked being sick. When the king came to see him, Amnon said to the king, "Please let my sister Tamar come, and make me a couple of cakes in my sight, that I may eat from her hand."

Then David sent home to Tamar, saying, "Go now to your brother Amnon and prepare food for him."

So Tamar went to her brother Amnon’s house; and he was lying down. And she took dough, and kneaded it, and made cakes while he watched, and baked the cakes.

She took the pan, and poured them out before him; but he refused to eat. Amnon said, "Have all men leave me." Every man went out from him.

Amnon said to Tamar, "Bring the food into the room, that I may eat from your hand." Tamar took the cakes which she had made, and brought them into the room to Amnon her brother.

When she had brought them near to him to eat, he took hold of her, and said to her, "Come, lie with me, my sister."

She answered him, "No, my brother, do not force me. For no such thing ought to be done in Israel. Do not do this folly.

I, where would I carry my shame? And as for you, you will be as one of the fools in Israel. Now therefore, please speak to the king; for he will not withhold me from you."

However he would not listen to her voice; but being stronger than she was, he overpowered her and raped her.

Then Amnon hated her with intense hatred, so that the hatred with which he hated her was greater than the love with which he had loved her. And Amnon said to her, "Get up, go away."

And Tamar said to him, "Don't, my brother, for this latter evil in sending me away is greater than the former thing that you did to me." But he would not listen to her.

Then he called the young man who served him, and said, "Send this one away from me, and bolt the door after her."

Now she was wearing an ornamented robe, for this was what the king's virgin daughters used to wear. Then his servant brought her out, and bolted the door after her.

Tamar put ashes on her head, and tore her ornamented robe that she wore. And she put her hand on her head and went away, crying aloud as she went.

Absalom her brother said to her, "Has Amnon your brother been with you? But now hold your peace, my sister. He is your brother. Do not take this thing to heart." So Tamar remained desolate in her brother Absalom's house.

But when King David heard of all these things, he was very angry. But he did not inflict pain on the spirit of his son Amnon, because he loved him, for he was his firstborn.

Absalom spoke to Amnon neither good nor bad; for Absalom hated Amnon, because he had violated his sister Tamar.

It happened after two full years, that Absalom had sheepshearers in Baal Hazor, which is beside Ephraim: and Absalom invited all the king's sons.

Absalom came to the king, and said, "See now, I have sheep shearers. Please let the king and his servants go with me."

The king said to Absalom, "No, my son, let us not all go, lest we be burdensome to you." But he pleaded with him; however he would not go, but blessed him.

Then Absalom said, "If not, please let my brother Amnon go with us." The king said to him, "Why

should he go with you?"
But Absalom pleaded with him, and he let Amnon and all the king's sons go with him. And Absalom prepared a feast like a king's feast.
And Absalom commanded his servants, saying, " now, when Amnon's heart is merry with wine; and when I tell you, 'Strike Amnon,' then kill him. Do not be afraid. Haven't I commanded you? Be courageous, and be valiant."
The servants of Absalom did to Amnon as Absalom had commanded. Then all the king's sons arose, and every man got up on his mule, and fled.
It happened, while they were in the way, that the news came to David, saying, "Absalom has slain all the king's sons, and there is not one of them left."
Then the king arose, and tore his garments, and lay on the ground; and all his servants stood by with their clothes torn.
Jonadab, the son of Shimeah, David's brother, answered, "Do not let my lord the king suppose that they have killed all the young men, the king's sons; for Amnon only is dead; for by the appointment of Absalom this has been determined from the day that he forced his sister Tamar.
Now therefore do not let my lord the king take the thing to his heart, to think that all the king's sons are dead; for Amnon only is dead."
But Absalom fled. And the young man who kept the watch lifted up his eyes and looked, and he saw many men coming on the road behind him from the side of the mountain in the descent. And the watchman came and told the king, and said, "I have seen many men coming from the Horonan road by the side of the mountain."
Jonadab said to the king, "The king's sons are coming."
It happened, as soon as he had finished speaking, that the king's sons came, and lifted up their voice, and wept. The king also and all his servants wept bitterly.
But Absalom fled, and went to Talmai the son of Ammihud, king of Geshur. And David mourned for his son every day.
So Absalom fled, and went to Geshur, and was there three years.
And the spirit of the king longed to go forth to Absalom: for he was comforted concerning Amnon, since he was dead.

CHAPTER 14

Now the days of Absalom were numbered. Here is the story of his death.
Joab saw that the king wanted to see Absalom again. So he found a woman in the town of Tekoa, and paid her to behave as a fake mourner, and she told a story to David about how her husband died, and one of her sons killed the other, and that the family wanted to avenge him, and leave her without a husband or child. And David wanted to help her, because her story was very said (if it had been true). But then she said something that made David think her real focus was to encourage David to act on behalf of Absalom. So he asked her, "Did Joab tell you to say these things?" And she nodded.
So the king said to Joab, "Look now, I have done this thing. Go therefore, bring the young man Absalom back." So Joab fell to the ground on his face, showed respect, and blessed the king.
Then Joab arose and went to Geshur, and brought Absalom to Jerusalem. But David said, "Absalom may return to his own house, but he will not see my face." For he was still angry at what Absalom had done to his brother.
As Absalom grew older, he had three sons and a daughter, whose name was Tamar. And she grew quite beautiful. And Absalom lived two full years in Jerusalem, but he did not see the king's face. So he asked Joab to see him, in hopes that Joab would let him visit, but Joab repeatedly rebuffed him. So the fires of his hatred and irritation burned hot, and he decided to set literal fires to match. And he discovered that Joab's field was near his, so... And Joab swore against Absalom, "Why have you and your servants set my field on fire?" So Absalom answered Joab, "I asked for you, several times, and you kept ignoring me. Why will you not let me see the king? Even if he will kill me, if I am not to see him, what business did I have to leave Geshur?" So Joab visited the king, and told him that Absalom wished to visit. So Absalom came to the king, and bowed himself on his face to the ground before David. And the king kissed Absalom.
Time passed, and Absalom began to ride around with a chariot and horse, with fifty men to run before

him. And he would wake early to do this, and stand near the road of the gate. Then when anyone had a dispute which should come to the king for judgement, then Absalom would call to him and say, "What city are you from?" When he said, "I am of one of the tribes of Israel," then Absalom would say to him, "Your matters are good and right; but there is no one from the king to hear you." And Absalom would say, "Oh that I were made judge in the land, then anyone who had a dispute and a judgement could come to me, and I would give him justice." So when any man came near to do him obeisance, he would extend his hand and embrace him, and kiss him. And Absalom did this sort of thing to all Israel who came to the king for judgement. In this way, Absalom stole the hearts of the men of Israel.
At the end of four years, Absalom said to the king, "Please let me go and pay my vow, which I have vowed to the LORD, in Hebron. For I said while I stayed at Geshur in Aram, 'If the LORD will bring me back to Jerusalem, then I will serve the LORD in Hebron.'" So David said to him, "Go in peace." So he arose, and went to Hebron. But Absalom sent spies throughout all the tribes of Israel, saying, "As soon as you hear the sound of the trumpet, then you will say, 'Absalom is king in Hebron.'" And he made some trouble in the land through these actions. And two hundred men went with Absalom out of Jerusalem, but they traveled as his friends and did not understand that he plotted against David. He also invited Ahithophel the Gilonite (David's counselor), from his city, while he was offering the sacrifices. And Absalom's conspiracy was strong, and he brought the people to side with him.
A messenger came to David, "The hearts of the men of Israel side with Absalom against you." So David said to all his servants who were with him at Jerusalem, "Arise, and let us flee. For otherwise, none of us will escape from Absalom. Make speed to depart, or he may bring down evil on us, and strike the city with the edge of the sword." And the servants said to the king, "We are ready to do whatever my lord the king chooses." But the king left ten women, who were secondary wives, to take care of the palace.
So all those with him, all the officers and warriors, were six hundred men, and they passed on before him. And when all the people who followed him from Gath passed on before the king, the king said to Ittai the Gathite,[397] "Why do you also go with us? Return to your own place, for you are a foreigner, and also an exile. You came only yesterday. Should I make you wander about with us, since I go I know not where? Go back, and take your brothers with you, and may the LORD show you kindness and truth."
But Ittai answered the king, "As the LORD lives, whatever place the king will be, whether in death or life, there also will I be." So Ittai the Gathite came also, and all his men, and their children too. And the king crossed the Wadi Kidron, and all the people passed the Olive road into the wilderness.
Zadok also came with all the Levites, bearing the ark of the covenant of GOD. And they set down the ark of GOD, they went until all the people finished passing out of the city. But the king said to Zadok, "Return the ark of GOD to the city. If I find favor in the eyes of the LORD, he will bring me back. Otherwise, let him do to me as seems good to him." The king said also to Zadok the priest, "Aren't you a seer? Return into the city in peace, and take your sons Ahimaaz and Jonathan with you. I will wait at the fords of the wilderness until you return." So Zadok carried the ark of GOD to Jerusalem, and they stayed there. David went up by the Mount of Olives. David wept. He had his head covered and went barefoot, and all those who were with him also covered his head, weeping as they ascended.
News came to David, "Ahithophel is among the conspirators with Absalom." David prayed, "LORD, please turn the counsel of Ahithophel into foolishness." When David had come to the top of the mountain to worship GOD,[398] Hushai the Archite came to meet him with his coat torn, and Earth on his head.
David said to him, "If you go with me, then you will be a burden to me. Return to the city, and tell Absalom, 'Your brothers have left, after your father left, and now I am your servant, King Absalom. Allow me to live.' Aren't Zadok and Abiathar the priests there with you? So whatever thing you will hear out of the king's house, you will tell it to Zadok and Abiathar the priests. Then you will send to me everything that you will hear." So Hushai came into the city and Absalom came into Jerusalem.
Ziba (servant of Mippibaal) also met him when he had reached the top, carrying two hundred loaves

[397] Originally, this word was Gittite, but I found this word problematic because it was too similar to Hittite, which became Hethite.
[398] Original text says "the mountain where GOD was worshiped" but that's Sinai.

of bread, one hundred clusters of raisins, one hundred other summer fruits, and a bottle of wine. He also brought these on donkeys. David asked why he had done this, and he explained, "Isn't it obvious? The donkeys are for the king's household to ride on, the bread and summer fruit for the young men to eat. As for the wine, that is for those faint in the wilderness to drink." The king asked, "Where is your master's son?" Ziba said to the king, "He is staying in Jerusalem, for he believes that today the house of Israel will restore the kingdom of his father." Then the king said to Ziba, "All that pertains to Mippibaal is yours." Ziba said, "Let me find favor in your sight, my king."[399]
The king, and all the people who were with him, arrived weary at the Jordan, and he refreshed himself there. Meanwhile, Absalom and all his people came to Jerusalem, and Ahithophel with him. When Hushai the Archite (David's friend) had come to Absalom, Hushai said to Absalom, "Long live the king. Long live the king." But Absalom said to Hushai, "Is this your kindness to your friend? Why did you not go with your friend?" Hushai said to Absalom, "whoever the LORD, and this people, and all the men of Israel have chosen, his will I be, and with him I will stay. Who should I serve? Shouldn't I serve in the presence of his son? As I have served in your father's presence, so will I be in your presence." Then Absalom asked Ahithophel, "Give your counsel, what we will do?" So Ahithophel said to Absalom, "Go in to your father's secondary wives, that he has left to keep the house. Then all Israel will hear that you are abhorred by your father. Then the hands of all who are with you will be strong." So they spread Absalom a tent on the top of the house, and Absalom went in to his father's secondary wives in the sight of all Israel. The counsel of Ahithophel, which he gave in those days, was considered[400] as an oracle of GOD, and everyone trusted his words.
So Ahithophel said to Absalom, "Let me now choose twelve thousand men, and I will arise and pursue after David tonight. I will come on him while he is weary and exhausted, and will make him afraid. All the people who are with him will flee. I will strike the king only. Then the people will return to you, as a bride returns to her husband. You will take the life of only one man, then all the people will be in peace."
Absalom and all the elders of Israel were pleased at such words. Then Absalom said, "Now call Hushai the Archite also, and let us hear likewise what he says."
Absalom spoke to him, "Ahithophel has spoken like this," and he told his words, "Will we do what he says? And if not, speak up." But Hushai said to Absalom, "The counsel that Ahithophel has given this time is not good. You know your father and his men are mighty men, and they are fierce like a bear robbed of her cubs in the field. Your father is a man of war, and will not lodge with the people. He is likely hidden in some pit or other place. If you do this, people will say, 'There is a slaughter among the people who follow Absalom.' Even those who are valiant, will faint at this battle, for all Israel knows that your father is a mighty man and those who are with him are valiant men. I strongly advise, that all Israel be gathered together to you, as the sand that is by the sea for multitude. You should personally go into battle. That way, we will come on him in some place where he will be found. We will light on him as the dew falls on the ground, and we will not leave so much as one of all the men who are with him. If he be gone into a city, then will all Israel bring ropes to that city, and we will draw it into the river, until there isn't one small stone found there."
Absalom and all the men of Israel said, "The counsel of Hushai the Archite is better than the counsel of Ahithophel." For the counsel of Hushai was indeed good in human terms, while the counsel of Ahithophel relied on faith. But the LORD defeated the good counsel of Ahithophel, to teach Absalom a lesson.
Now Jonathan and Ahimaaz were staying by En Rogel, and a female servant used to go and tell them news, and they went and told this information to King David. For they might not be seen to come into the city. But a boy saw them, and told Absalom. Then they both went away quickly, and came to the house of a man in Bahurim, who had a well in his court, and they went down there. The woman took and spread the covering over the well's mouth, and spread out bruised grain on it.

---

[399] This part after this has Shimei cursing David for no good reason. But David later forgives him. If he really forgave him, this should be forgotten, but it later forms a basis for why Shimei is punished. Whether this happened or not, it's kinda crappy. Let's ignore it and move on.
[400] Considered, as in, he might have been an oracle, or he might not have been. I'll let the reader decide based on his actions, and their result.

When Absalom's servants came to the woman to the house, they asked, "Where are Ahimaaz and Jonathan?" The woman said to them, "They must have gone over the brook of water." They looked but could not find them, so they returned to Jerusalem. After they had departed, she uncovered the well, and they out, and went and told King David the information. And they said to him, "Arise and pass quickly over the water, for Ahithophel counseled these words against you." Then David arose with his men, and they passed over the Jordan.
When Ahithophel saw that his counsel was not followed, he saddled his donkey, and went home, to his city, and set his house in order, and hanged himself. So his blood was on Absalom's hands, for not listening.
As for David, when he came to Mahanaim. Absalom passed over the Jordan. Absalom set Amasa over the army (instead of Joab). Now Amasa was the son of Jether the Ishmaelite, who went into Abigail the daughter of Jesse. So Absalom camped in the land of Gilead.
When David had come to Mahanaim, his men brought beds, basins, pottery utensils, wheat, barley, meal, parched grain, beans, lentils, honey, the curd of the flock, and the cheese of the herd. And they presented them to David and to the people who were with him to eat. For they said, "The people are hungry and tired and thirsty in the wilderness.'" And David numbered the people who were with him, and he set captains of thousands and captains of hundreds over them. David sent forth the people: a third under the hand of Joab, and a third under the hand of Abishai, and a third under the hand of Ittai the Gathite. The king said to the people, "I will surely go forth with you myself also." But the people said, "You must not go, for if we retreat, then no one will care about us. If half of us die, no one will care about us. But you are worth ten thousand of us. Therefore it is better now if you support us in the city." The king said to them, "I will do what seems best to you." The king stood beside the gate, and all the people went out by hundreds and by thousands.
The king commanded Joab and Abishai and Ittai, saying, "Deal gently for my sake with Absalom, for those he is against me, I love him." But the people didn't necessarily feel the same for Absalom. So the people went out into the field against Israel, and the battle was in the forest of Ephraim. The people of Israel were struck there before the servants of David, and there was a great slaughter there that day of twenty thousand men.
And Absalom happened to meet the servants of David. Now Absalom was quite pretty, having fair and delicate skin and long beautiful hair. And in particular, he grew out his hair quite long, cutting it only once a year when it became heavy.[401] And he was riding on his mount, and he went under the thick boughs of a great oak, and his hair caught hold of the oak, and he was left hanging between the sky and ground. And his mount that was under him went onward. And a certain man saw it, and told Joab, and said, "I saw Absalom hanging in an oak."
Joab said to the man who told him, "You saw it, and why did you not strike him there to the ground? I would have given you ten pieces of silver, and a belt." The man said to Joab, "Though I should receive a thousand pieces of silver in my hand, I still wouldn't put forth my hand against the king's son. Didn't the king command, 'Deal gently for my sake with Absalom, for those he is against me, I love him'? If I did something against him, I was certain you yourself would have set yourself against me."
But Joab would have none of this. He took three darts in his hand, and thrust them through the heart of Absalom, while he was yet alive in the midst of the oak. Then ten young men who bore Joab's armor surrounded and struck Absalom, and killed him. Joab blew the trumpet, and the people returned from pursuing after Israel. They took Absalom, and cast him into the great pit in the forest. And they piled over him a very great heap of stones. Then all Israel fled, everyone to his tent.
Now Absalom in his lifetime had taken and reared up for himself a pillar which is in the King's Valley, for he said, "I have no son to keep my name in memory." He called the pillar after his own name, and it is called Absalom's monument. Then Ahimaaz said, "Let me now run, and bear the king news, how that the LORD has avenged him of his enemies." For he showed no remorse or compassion for the son David loved.
But Joab said to him, "You will not be the bearer of news this day, but you will bear news another day. Because this day, the king's son is dead." Instead, he sent a Cushite to deliver the news at a later time.

[401] This is a reprise for context. Letting the audience understand what killed him.

Then Ahimaaz said yet again to Joab, "Let me also run after the Cushite. that I might be the one to tell him."[402] Joab said, "Why do you want to run, my son, since that you will have no reward for the news?"
Even so, he said, "But come what may, I will run." He said to him, "Run, that you may have your reward." So Ahimaaz ran by the way of the Plain, and outran the Cushite.
Now David was sitting between the two gates, and the watchman went up to the roof of the gate to the wall and lifted up his eyes and looked and saw a man was running alone towards him. And the king said, "If he is alone, there is good news in his mouth." And he came closer and closer. But the watchman said, "Another man running alone." Yet David deluded himself, "He also brings good news."
Ahimaaz came near. He bowed himself before the king with his face to Earth, and said, "Blessed is the LORD your GOD, who has delivered up the men who lifted up their hand against my lord the king."
The king asked, "Is it well with the young man Absalom?" But just then, the Cushite came. And he said, "News for my lord the king; for the LORD has avenged you this day of all those who rose up against you." The king said to the Cushite, "Yes, but... is it well with the young man Absalom?" The Cushite answered, "May the enemies of my lord the king, and all who rise up against you to do you harm, be as that young man is." And David began to weep, saying, "My son Absalom. My son, my son Absalom. I wish I had died for you, Absalom, my son, my son."

CHAPTER 15

It was told Joab, "The king weeps and mourns for Absalom." The victory that day was turned into mourning to all the people, for the people finally understood that David cared for his son.[403] The people sneaked around the city that day, as people who are ashamed steal away.
The king covered his face, and he cried with a loud voice, "My son Absalom, Absalom, my son, my son." Joab came into the house to the king, saying, "Are you not ashamed? Look at the faces of all your servants, who this day have saved your life and the lives of your sons and of your daughters, and the lives of your wives, and the lives of your secondary wives. For you have declared this day, that leaders and servants are nothing to you. If Absalom had lived, and all of us had died, then you would be pleased? Get up, go out, and speak to comfort everyone. For I swear to GOD, if you do not go out, not a man will stay with you. That would be worse to you than all the evil that has happened to you from your youth until now." In this, neither Joab, nor any of his other men had any sympathy after killing his son. So David had to decide whether to stay in mourning or suck it up.
Then the king arose, and sat in the gate. They told to all the people, saying, "The king is sitting in the gate." All the people came before the king. So King David sent word to Zadok and to Abiathar the priests, "Why are you the last to bring the king back to his house? You are my brothers, you are my bone and my flesh. Why then are you the last to bring back the king? Now then, GOD do so to me, and more also, if you aren't commander of the army before me continually in place of Joab." Thus he won over the heart of all the men of Judah, so that they sent to the king, "Return, you and those with you."
So the king returned and came to the Jordan. And Judah came to Gilgal, to bring the king across the Jordan.
And Shimei hurried and came down with the men of Judah to meet King David. And there were a thousand men from Benjamin with him. But Ziba the servant of the house of Saul, and his fifteen sons and his twenty servants with him, waded through the Jordan ahead of the king, and they crossed the ford to bring over the king's household, and to do what was good in his sight. And Shimei the son of Gera fell down before the king, when he had crossed over the Jordan.
He said to the king, "Do not let my lord impute iniquity to me, nor remember that which I did perversely the day that my lord the king went out of Jerusalem, that the king should take it to his heart," for at one time in the past, he had cursed David, and thrown rocks at him, "For I know that I have sinned. Therefore I have come this day the first of all the house of Joseph to go down to meet my lord the king."
And Abishai asked, "will Shimei not be put to death for this, because he cursed the LORD's anointed?"

---

[402] This fucking psychopath. The king's son is dead, and he wants to cheer about it, and get some kind of reward.
[403] Bastards.

But David said, "What have I to do with you, you sons of Zeruiah, that you should this day be adversaries to me? Will there any man be put to death this day in Israel?" And the king showed mercy to Shimei, saying, "You will not die." The king swore this to him.
Now Mippibaal also came down to meet the king, but he was unkempt. When he had come to Jerusalem to meet the king, that the king said to him, "Why did you not go with me, Mippibaal?" And he answered, "I was deceived by a servant. For I said to him, 'Saddle a donkey for me so that I may ride on it and go with the king,' for I am lame. But he has slandered me. You may therefore do whatever is good in your eyes. For all my father's house were but dead men the king, but you set me among those who ate at your own table. What right therefore have I that I should cry any more to the king?" David asked him, "Why do you speak any more of your matters? You and Ziba divide the land." Mippibaal said to the king, "Let him take it. I am happy that the king is returning to his own house."
After that, Barzillai came down from Rogelim, and he went over the Jordan with the king to conduct him from the Jordan. Now Barzillai was eighty years old, and he had provided for the king with his great wealth while he was staying at Mahanaim. So the king said to Barzillai, "Come over with me, and I will sustain you with me in Jerusalem." But Barzillai said to the king, "How many are the days of the years of my life, that I should go up with the king to Jerusalem? I am this day eighty years old. Can I discern between good and bad? Can I taste what I eat or what I drink? Can I hear any more the voice of singing men and singing women? Why then should I be yet a burden to the king? I would but just go over the Jordan with the king. Why should the king repay me with such a reward? Please let me turn back again, that I may die in my own city, by the grave of my father and my mother. But let Kimham go over with the king, and do what will seem good to you." The king answered, "Kimham will go over with me, and I will do to him that which will seem good. Whatever you require of me, that I will do for you." Then all the people crossed over the Jordan, but the king remained. Then the king kissed Barzillai, and blessed him; and he returned to his own place.
So the king went over to Gilgal, and Kimham went over with him. All the people of Judah brought the king over, and also half the people of Israel. All the men of Israel came to the king and asked, "Why have the men of Judah our brothers stolen you away, and brought the king and his household over the Jordan, and all David's men with him?"
All the men of Judah answered the men of Israel, "Because the king is a close relative to us. Why then are you angry about this matter? Have we eaten at all at the king's cost? Or has he given us any gifts?"
The men of Israel answered the men of Judah, and said, "We are the firstborn rather than you. Why then did you despise us, that our advice should not be first had in bringing back our king?"

CHAPTER 16

Among the people, there was one whose name was Sheba, and he blew the trumpet, and said, "We have no portion in David, neither have we inheritance in the son of Jesse. Every man to his tents, Israel." And he turned the men of Israel from following David, and got them to follow him instead. But the men of Judah stayed with their king.
Then David came to his house at Jerusalem, and the king took the ten women who he had left to keep the house (his secondary wives), and put them in custody. He provided them with sustenance, but did not go in to them. So they were shut up to the day of their death, living as widows.
Then the king said to Amasa, "Call me the men of Judah together within three days, and be here present." So Amasa went to call the men of Judah together; but he stayed longer than the set time which he had appointed him. David said, "Now Sheba the son of Bikri will do us more harm than Absalom did. So then, take your lord's servants, and pursue after him. For I do not want him to get himself fortified cities, and escape out of our sight."
David went out and he was followed by Joab's men, the Cherethites, the Pelethites, and all the mighty men. They went out of Jerusalem to pursue after Sheba the son of Bikri. When they came to the great stone which is in Gibeon, Amasa came to meet them.
Now, Joab was clothed in his apparel of war that he had put on, and on it was a sash with a sword fastened on his waist in its sheath. As he went forth it fell out. Joab said to Amasa, "Is it well with you, my brother?" Joab took Amasa by the beard with his right hand to kiss him. Amasa didn't notice that Joab had a sword ready, and while Joab embraced him, he was stabbed, and his bowels wer cut

out from his body and fell on the ground. For it was believed that he also was a traitor against David. Amasa lay wallowing in his blood in the midst of the highway. When the man saw that all the people stood still, he carried Amasa out of the highway into the field, and cast a garment over him, when he saw that everyone who came by him stood still.[404]
After that, Joab and his brother Abishai pursued after Sheba the son of Bikri. And one of his young men said to the people, "Any who is for David, let him follow Joab." So after that, all the people went on after Joab, to pursue after Sheba the son of Bikri, and they assembled and followed him. They came and besieged Sheba in Beth Maacah, and they built a siege ramp against the city, and it stood against the outer wall. Then all the people who were with Joab battered the wall to bring it down. Then a wise woman cried out of the city, "Please tell Joab, to come near here, that I may speak with him." So Joab came near to her, and the woman asked, "Are you Joab?" He nodded. Then she said, "You seek to destroy a city and a mother in Israel. Why do you want to swallow up the inheritance of the LORD?" But Joab answered, "Far be it from me that I should swallow up or destroy. But a man of the hill country of Ephraim, Sheba by name, has lifted up his hand against David. Deliver him only, and I will depart from the city." The woman said to Joab, "His head will be thrown to you over the wall." Then the woman went to all the people, and they cut off the head of Sheba, and threw it out to Joab. He blew the trumpet, and they were dispersed from the city, every man to his tent. Joab returned to Jerusalem to David.

CHAPTER 17

David said to Joab and the captains of the army, "Now go back and forth through all the tribes of Israel, and number the people that I may know the sum of our fighting men." For he desired to know if he could expand the borders of Israel.
So Joab said to the king, "Now may the LORD your GOD add to the people, however many they may be, one hundred times. But why does my lord the king delight in this thing?" But he did not say.
Nevertheless, Joab obeyed David, and against the captains of the army. Joab and the captains of the army went out to number the children of Israel. They crossed over many regions, until they had gone back and forth through all the land, then they came to Jerusalem at the end of nine months and twenty days.
So Joab gave up the sum of the numbering of the people to the king: and there were in Israel eight hundred thousand valiant men who drew the sword, and the men of Judah were five hundred thousand men.
David's heart struck him after that he had numbered the people. David said to the LORD, "I have sinned greatly in that which I have done," for he had relied on the strength of men and not on his faith in GOD, "But now, LORD, put away, I beg you, the iniquity of mine. For I have done very foolishly."
When David rose up in the morning, the word of the LORD came to the prophet Gad, "The LORD, offers you three things. Choose one of them, and he will punish you in this way."
So Gad asked to David, "Will three years of famine come to you in your land? Or will you flee three months before your foes while they pursue you? Or will there be three days' plague in your land? Now answer, and consider what answer I will return to him who sent me." David said to Gad, "Let me fall now into the hand of the LORD, for his mercies are great. My sin began because I trusted and feared the hand of man."
So the LORD sent a pestilence on Israel from the morning onward, and the destruction began among the people. And there died of the people seventy thousand men. When the angel stretched out his hand toward Jerusalem to destroy it, the LORD relented of the disaster and said to the angel who destroyed the people, "It is enough. Now stay your hand." The LORD appeared by the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite. And David lifted up his eyes and saw the LORD standing between ground and the sky, having a drawn sword in his hand stretched out over Jerusalem. And his eyes looked instead toward the grains of the field, toward the herds of animals. After that, there was famine three years, and David sought the face of the LORD.
So David and the elders, clothed in sackcloth, fell down on their faces. David spoke to the LORD, "I have sinned. I, the shepherd of this people, have done great evil. But these sheep, what have they

[404] This was out of order, so I shifted it to another paragraph.

done? Please let your hand be against me, and against my father's house."
That day, Gad came to David and said to him, "Go up, build an altar to the LORD on the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite." David went up according to the words of the prophet, as the LORD commanded. And Araunah looked out and saw the king and his servants coming on toward him, so Araunah went out and bowed himself before the king with his face to the ground. And Araunah said, "Why has my lord the king come to me?" David said, "To buy your threshing floor, to build an altar to the LORD, that the famine[405] may be stopped among the people."
So Araunah said to David, "Let my lord the king take and offer up what seems good to him. Here is the cattle for the burnt offering, the threshing instruments, and the yokes of the oxen for the wood." All these Araunah gave to the king. And Araunah said to the king, "May the LORD your GOD accept you."
The king said to Araunah, "I cannot take such offerings which cost me nothing, but I will most certainly buy it from you for a price. I will not offer burnt offerings without value to the LORD my GOD." So David bought the threshing floor and the oxen for fifty shekels of silver. Then David built an altar to the LORD there, and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings. So the LORD responded to the plea for the land. After that, the famine was gone, and the land was lush and beautiful again.

CHAPTER 18

Now there was great unrest in Gibeon.[406] The LORD said, "It is for Saul, and for his bloody house, because he put to death the Gibeonites." So David called the Gibeonites and spoke to them. Now these Gibeonites were not of the children of Israel, but of the remnant of the Amorites. Saul sought to kill them in his zeal for the children of Israel and Judah.
And David said to the Gibeonites, "What will I do for you? And with what will I make atonement, that you may bless the inheritance of the LORD?" The Gibeonites said to him, "No amount of silver or gold between us and Saul or his house will do." He said, "Whatever you say, that will I do for you."
They said to the king, "Let seven men of his sons be delivered to us, and we will hang them up to the LORD in Gibeah." David said, "I will give them."
But the king spared Mippibaal, the son of Jonathan the son of Saul, because of the LORD's oath that was between them, between David and Jonathan the son of Saul. But the king took the two sons of Rizpah and the five sons of Merob, then he delivered them into the hands of the Gibeonites. Then they hanged them in the mountain before the LORD, and all seven of them fell together. They were put to death in the first days at the beginning of barley harvest.
After this, Rizpah took sackcloth and spread it for her on the rock, from the beginning of harvest until water was poured on them from the sky. She allowed neither the birds of the sky to rest on their bodies by day, nor the animals of the field by night. It was told David what Rizpah had done. So David went and took the bones of Saul and the bones of Jonathan from the men of Jabesh Gilead (who had stolen them from the street of Beth Shan, where the Philistines had hanged them in the day that the Philistines killed Saul in Gilboa), and he brought up the bones of Saul and the bones of Jonathan his son and gathered them with the bones of those who were hanged. They buried the bones of Saul and Jonathan his son in the country of Benjamin in Zela, and they performed all that the king commanded. After that, GOD was entreated for the land.
But this caused a war. The Philistines fought again with Israel, and David fought until he became exhausted. And Dodo son of Joash captured him. His spear weighed three hundred bronze shekels, and he was armed with a new sword, and he thought he could kill David. But Abishai the son of Zeruiah helped him, and struck the Philistine dead. Then the men of David said, "You must not go out to battle with us again, so that you do not extinguish the lamp of Israel."
After this, that there was again war with the Philistines at Gezer. And during the war, Sibbekai the Hushathite killed Saph, a descendant of the Raphah.
And a third time, there war with the Philistines at Gob. Elhanan killed the brother of Goliath the Gathite. This caused a war against Gath. And there, there was a man of great stature, who had on every hand six fingers and on every foot six toes, so he had twenty-four fingers and toes in total, and he was a child of the giant. When he defied Israel, the son of Shimeah, David's brother, killed him.

---

[405] Originally, plague. But the plague was three days, while the famine was three years, and I kinda spliced chapter contents together.
[406] Originally, it's a famine here, but the previous chapter mentions a three year famine, so I decided to splice the narrative.

And four others were born to the giant in Gath, but they fell by the hand of David, and by the hand of his servants.

CHAPTER 19

David spoke to the LORD the words of this song in the day that the LORD delivered him out of the hand of all his enemies, "The LORD is my Rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer. My GOD, my Rock, in him I will take refuge, my shield, and the horn of my salvation. He is my high tower, and my refuge, my savior. He saves from the people of unjust violence. I call on the LORD, who is worthy to be praised, and I am saved from my enemies. Waves of death surround me, and the currents of ungodliness overwhelm me. The cords of Sheol are around me. The snares of death they catch me. In my distress I call upon the LORD, and I cry out to my GOD. He has heard my voice out of his temple, and my cry came into his ears.

Then Earth shook and trembled. The foundations of the mountains quaked and were shaken, because he was angry. Smoke went up out of his nostrils. Fire out of his mouth devoured. Coals were kindled by it. Thick darkness was under his feet. He rode on a cherub, and flew; and he glided on the wings of the wind. He made darkness his hiding place, his canopy around him thick clouds dark with water. From the brightness before him his thick clouds passed on, with hailstones and coals of fire.

The LORD thundered from Heaven. The Most High uttered his voice. And he sent out arrows and scattered them, and he shot lightning bolts and routed them. Then the channels of the sea appeared. The foundations of the world were laid bare by the rebuke of the LORD, at the blast of the breath of his nostrils.

He sent from on high and he took me. He drew me out of many waters. He delivered me from my strong enemy, from those who hated me, for they were too mighty for me. They came on me in the day of my calamity, but the LORD was my support. He also brought me out into a large place. He delivered me, because he delighted in me.

The LORD rewarded me according to my righteousness. He rewarded me according to the cleanness of my hands. For I have kept the ways of the LORD, and have not wickedly departed from my GOD. For all his ordinances were before me, and his statutes I did not put away from me. I was also perfect toward him. I kept myself from my iniquity. Therefore the LORD has rewarded me according to my righteousness, according to the cleanness of my hands in his sight.

With the faithful you show yourself faithful. With the innocent you show yourself innocent. With the pure you show yourself pure. And with the crooked you show yourself tortuous. You save a humble people, but the eyes of the proud you will bring low.

For you light my lamp. The LORD my GOD lights up my darkness. For by you, I run against a troop. By my GOD, I leap over a wall.

As for GOD, his way is perfect. The word of the LORD is pure. He is a shield to all those who take refuge in him. For who is GOD, besides the LORD? Who is a rock, besides our GOD, the GOD who girds me with strength, and makes my way blameless? He makes my feet like those of a deer, and sets me on my high places. He teaches my hands to war, so that my arms bend a bow of bronze. You have also given me the shield of your salvation, and your right hand holds me up, and your help has made me great.

You have enlarged my steps under me. My feet have not slipped. I pursued my enemies and overtook them, and I did not turn back until they were destroyed. And I consumed them, and struck them through, so that they did not rise. And they fell beneath my feet. For you have equipped me with strength for the battle. You have subdued under me those who rose up against me. You have also made my enemies turn their backs to me, that I might cut off those who hate me. They cry out, but there was none to save. They even cry to the LORD, but he did not answer them. Then I ground them as fine as the dust on the surface of a path. Like the mud in the streets, I trampled them. You also have delivered me from the strivings of my people. You have kept me to be the head of the nations. A people who I have not known will serve me. As soon as they hear of me they obey me. Foreigners come cringing to me, they are not bound in chains.

The LORD lives. Blessed be my rock. Exalted be GOD, the rock of my salvation, the GOD who executes vengeance for me, and subdues peoples under me, who brings me away from my enemies. You lift me up above those who rise up against me. You protect me from the violent man.

Therefore I will praise you, LORD, among the nations, and will sing praises to your name. The LORD gives great deliverance to his king, and shows loving kindness to his anointed, to David and to his descendants."

CHAPTER 20

And David was full of his days, and he had many heirs. He had sons and daughters, many wives, and a great kingdom. For he had loved the LORD with all of his heart most of his life, and the LORD had blessed him and protected his kingdom from. And he grew to an old age, having not died in battle, nor been killed by court intrigue. And just as he loved the LORD, his own people loved him.[407]

SOLOMON

CHAPTER 1

Now David had become very old, and he shivered constantly from age even when covered with clothes. So his servants searched for a young virgin, hoping he would hold her and keep warm. But while she was very beautiful and very helpful as a servant, David lacked passion for her. And indeed, in his advanced age, he only cared about his wife Bathsheba and his family.

Speaking of which, the son of his wife Haggith named Adonijah had ambitions to be king, and he would take out chariots and horsemen and has fifty men to run before him. And his father David never scolded him, and he began to be more and more of a spoiled twit.[408] It did not help that he was very handsome. Adonijah was friends with Joab and Abiathar the priest, and they had his back. But Zadok the priest, Benaiah the son of Jeoiada, and Nathan the prophet,[409] and some of David's mighty men like Shimei and Rei had no use for him. And Adonijah would slaughter animals as an event and call his friends and his brothers, but deliberately exclude Solomon, Nathan the prophet, Benaiah, or Shimei and Rei. So Nathan the prophet spoke to Bathsheba, "Adonijah behaves as though he is already in power, and David doesn't know it yet. If you want to save your own life and the life of your son, shouldn't you remind David that he pledged Solomon would sit on the throne." And Nathan pledged that he would come and confirm her words.

Now, the king was very old, and Abishag the Shunammite was attending to the king. And David asked her what she would like, and she repeated the request. She also mentioned the invitation to animal sacrifices that had apparently gapped Solomon. She continued, "My lord the king, the eyes of all Israel are on you to announce to them who will sit on the throne of my lord the king after him. Otherwise, when you will sleep with your fathers, I and my son Solomon will be considered criminals to be hunted."

So David summoned the prophet Nathan, and asked him about this, and confirmed what she had said. So he said, "Summon Bathsheba to me." So she came into the king's presence, and stood before him. And he promised to grant her request. Then he called Zadok the priest, Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada. And the said to them, "Take with you the servants of your lord, and have Solomon my son ride on my own mule, and bring him down to Gihon. And have Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet anoint him there king over Israel. Blow the trumpet, and say, 'Long live King Solomon.' I have appointed him to be prince over Israel and over Judah. And he will sit on the throne from now."

So they went down, put Solomon David's mule, and then Zadok the priest took the horn of oil out of the LORD's Tent, and anointed Solomon. They blew the trumpet and all the people said, "Long live King Solomon." And all the people came up after him, the people piped with pipes, and rejoiced with great joy. And the Earth (figuratively) split open at their sound.

Now Adonijah and all the guests who were with him were eating, but when they heard this, they stopped. When Joab heard the sound of the trumpet, he said, "What is this noise of the city being in an uproar?" And Jonathan came, so Adonijah asked him, "Do you bring good news?"

But Jonathan answered Adonijah, "No. Our lord King David has made Solomon a king. The king has sent with him Zadok the priest, Nathan the prophet, Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, and many others.

---

[407] This passage is a transitional, because the chapters before do a very poor job at

[408] After reading earlier, this has parallels to how Absalom acted, so now I understand.

[409] Not to be confused with his own child Nathan

And they have anointed him king in Gihon. They returned from there rejoicing, so this is the noise that you have heard. Solomon sits on the throne of the kingdom. The king's servants also came to bless David, saying, 'May your GOD make the name of Solomon better than your name, and make his throne greater than your throne.' And the king bowed himself on the bed. Also thus said the king, 'Blessed be the LORD, the GOD of Israel, who has given one to sit on my throne this day, my eyes even seeing it.'"
At these words, the guests of Adonijah were afraid. And each man rose from his seat and went his way. So Adonijah was frightened, and went and touched the horns of the altar and prayed, "Let King Solomon swear to me first that I will not be killed."
Solomon said, "As long as he shows himself a worthy man, I will not touch even a hair on his head. But if wickedness be found in him, he will die." So Solomon sent for him, and they brought him down from the altar. He came and bowed down to the King Solomon. After that, Solomon said to him, "Go to your house."

CHAPTER 2

When David's life was drawing to a close, he called Solomon to his side, and he told him, "I am going the way of all life on Earth. You need to be strong, and obedient to the law of of the LORD, that you may prosper in all that you do. Likewise, you know that my life is filled with memories of war and past wrongs," and he began to list what various people did against or for him, "but my hope is that you do according to your wisdom, to show vengeance to those you deem deserve it, and kindness to those who have served well under me." And he talked about the many men who had served well or who had wronged him, but very little of this is important to the reader. Those who live have a responsibility to live wisely, not hang on to memories of former squabbles that have nothing to do with them personally.[410]
After he had begged Solomon to avenge everyone who had wronged him and show mercy to everyone who he had found favor with, David gave up the spirit. Then David slept with his fathers, and was buried in the City of David. Now David had reigned over Israel for forty years: and of these seven years were in Hebron, while he reigned thirty-three years in Jerusalem. Solomon sat on the throne of David his father, for his father had firmly established kingdom.
After this, Adonijah came to Solomon's mother Bathsheba, and paid homage to her. And Bathsheba said, "Do you come peaceably?" And he said, "Peaceably."
So Bathsheba asked him why he was here. And he said, "As you know, I was in control of Israel and all of Israel supported my right to govern this land," and Bathsheba said nothing because it was better to let a proud and entitled man think what he will, "but your son took this right from me, for the LORD favored him instead of me. So now I think I deserve something." Bathsheba sighed inwardly, but she said, "Of course."
So Adonijah asked, "Could you speak to Solomon, and ask him for Abishag as my wife?" So she agreed.
And Bathsheba went to Solomon, and the king rose from his throne for her. And she asked a favor, and he said he would do anything for her. *Anything*. So she said, "Let Abishag the Shunammite be given to Adonijah your brother as wife." So much for anything. Solomon sword by the LORD, "GOD do so to me, and more also, if Adonijah has not spoken this word against his own life. Now therefore as the LORD lives, who has established me, and set me on the throne of David my father, and who has made me a house, as he promised, surely Adonijah will be put to death this day." For Solomon believed the LORD had given him Abishag, and would not yield her to anyone. And so, he foolishly made war against Adonijah. In this way, Solomon broke not only his word to his mother Bathsheba, but a previous vow to not kill Adonijah if he surrendered. And this was among his first acts as king.
And he also said to Abiathar, "Go to Anathoth, to your own fields, for you are worthy of death. But I will not at this time put you to death, because you bore the ark of the LORD before David my father, and because you were afflicted in all in which my father was afflicted." So Solomon deposed Abiathar from being priest to the LORD, and in so doing, Solomon fulfilled the word of the LORD, which was

[410] It was about three paragraphs of David saying, "You'll punish Joab for me, right? And Shimei? And reward these people?" And it made me think of how kingdoms hold grudges for literal centuries and fight senseless wars, instead of just giving up the feud and trying to coexist. It was just very tiresome. It also greatly contrasts with JESUS's death.

spoken concerning the house of Eli in Shiloh.[411] And Solomon continued in this way, punishing people his father hated and rewarding those he loved.[412] For Solomon was simply the son of the man who the LORD had chosen. But the LORD forgave his actions, though they were senseless. He even punished Shimei for nothing more than leaving an area, Shimei who had served his father for many years, and who sided with him against Adonijah. For he said that one time, Shimei cursed his father, and even though his father long ago forgave him, Solomon could not.

CHAPTER 3

After this, Solomon became the son-in-law of the Pharaoh in Egypt, and he took Pharaoh's daughter and brought her into the City of David, and he built a house for himself and a wall for the city of Jerusalem. Now Solomon followed the commands of his father dutifully, and he sacrificed and burnt incense in the high and holy places. But in those days, there was no house built for the LORD. And Solomon went to Gibeon to sacrifice, and offered a thousand offerings on that altar.

That night, the LORD appeared to Solomon and said, "Ask anything." Now, Solomon could have asked for power or riches or personal glory, but in a moment of true honesty, he realized that he was a foolish king with nothing to show for his reign but what his father had told him, and that was now done. So Solomon asked, "You have shown my father David great loving kindness, according as he walked before you in truth, and in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart with you. Now, my LORD GOD, you have made me king after my father. And I nothing more than a child, playacting at being king in the absence of his father. I have been given charge over your chosen people, who are even now as many as the stars. And so I ask of you: give me a wise mind and a just heart, that I can know good and evil, and reign for your great people."

And this greatly pleased the LORD, that Solomon had asked this thing. For GOD knew that Solomon was wicked and foolish, but because he was honest, the LORD loved him.

GOD said to him, "Of all that you could have asked, you asked neither long life, nor riches, nor women, but you asked instead the wisdom to rule wisely and justly. As long as you love the LORD your GOD,[413] you will indeed have wisdom to rule justly. But you will also have many other things, riches, women, long life, and great honor. Your wealth will be so incomparable, that in the days to come, people will use If you will walk in my ways, to keep my statutes and my commandments, as your father David walked, then I will lengthen your days." After that, Solomon awoke from the dream, and as he was offering peace sacrifices the next day, two women came to his presence. Now these women were prostitutes, so they both slept with many men. And the one woman said, "I and this woman dwell in the same house, and I delivered my child with her present. And three days after, she also delivered a child. But that night, she rolled over and crushed him. And she awoke late that night and took my child, and gave me her dead baby." But the other woman told the same story with herself as the victim.

And the wisdom of the LORD came upon Solomon and he judged between them. "Show me the child," he said, and the brought the child in front of him." And he told his servants, "Give me a sword, and I will divide your child in two." And one of the women indeed wanted to divide it, but the other said, "No, my king! Give it to her, but do not do such a thing!" And Solomon knew that the one who showed mercy must be his mother. So he ordered the child spared and gave him to the one who loved him.

And all of Israel heard that Solomon was just, and they feared the king, for they saw that the wisdom that was from GOD was in him to do justice.

CHAPTER 4

King Solomon was king over all Israel. And he appointed many officials: Azariah (the son of Zadok, the priest), Elihoreph and Ahijah (the sons of Shisha) who were scribes, Jehoshaphat (the son of Ahilud) the recorder, Benaiah (the son of Jehoiada) over the army, he retained Zadok and Abiathar as

---

[411] Wow, that's way back in the beginning of Samuel.

[412] I shortened alot of this part. It may be historical, but it leaves a nasty taste in my mouth. Joab goes to the Tent of the LORD, but the LORD gives no mercy. Or awarding others with blessings, like some corrupt politician offering favor. It's all Solomon obeying his father, and none of it is very edifying. And then even Shimei who was mentioned earlier, they have some excuse that he cursed him earlier, and he should be punished, so despite what good he did since then, he is punished.

[413] Why does Solomon seem foolish again later? It's because this blessing is conditional, and up to his own free will.

priests, Azariah (the son of Nathan) with authority over the officers, Zabud (the son of Nathan) as chief minister, Ahishar he gave watch over the palace, Eliab (son of Joab) was in the army, Adoniram (the son of Abda) watched over the men subject to forced labor, for Solomon had no qualms against slavery being such a man of wisdom.[414]
Solomon also had twelve officers over all Israel, who provided food for the king and his household, and each man had to make provision for a month in the year. These are their names: Ben Hur, Ben Deker, Ben Hesed, Ben Abinadab (he had Taphath the daughter of Solomon as wife), Baana, Ben Geber, Ahinadab, Ahimaaz (he also took Basemath the daughter of Solomon as wife), Baana, Jehoshaphat, Shimei, and Geber. And Judah and Israel were filled with those eating and drinking and making merry, as many as the sand which is by the sea in multitude.[415] And Solomon ruled over all the kingdoms, up to the land of the Philistines and to the border of Egypt. And these brought tribute and served Solomon all the days of his life. Solomon's provision for one day was thirty measures of fine flour, sixty measures of meal, ten head of fat cattle, twenty head of cattle out of the pastures, and one hundred sheep. There were also deer, gazelles, roebucks, and fattened fowl. And Solomon had peace on all sides around him. Judah and Israel lived safely, for every man tended to his vine and his fig tree. And Solomon had four thousand stalls of horses for his chariots, and twelve thousand horsemen. And these officers provided food for King Solomon, and for all who came to King Solomon's table was fed. They also brought barley and straw for the horses, every man according to his duty (not according to his need).[416]
For GOD gave Solomon wisdom and exceptional insight, and very great understanding, even as the sand that is on the seashore. And his wisdom was used for the purposes of creating a stable kingdom and securing peace with the surrounding lands. And GOD's wisdom working through Solomon[417] excelled the wisdom of all the people of the east and all the wisdom of Egypt. For Solomon had been blessed with wisdom beyond all men, and his fame was in all the nations all around. He spoke three thousand proverbs, and his songs were one thousand five. He spoke of trees, from the cedar that is in Lebanon to the hyssop that springs out of the wall. He spoke also of animals, of birds, of crawling creatures, and of fish. And all peoples came to hear the wisdom of GOD from Solomon, from all kings of Earth, who had heard of his wisdom. But without GOD, Solomon's wisdom was more like that of Jaden Smith.[418]

CHAPTER 5

Now Hiram of Tyre sent servants to Solomon, for he had heard that they had anointed him king in the place of his father. Hiram was ever a lover of David. And Solomon commissioned a temple for the LORD, saying, "You know how that David my father could not build a house for the name of the LORD his GOD because wars were about him on every side. But now the LORD my GOD has given me peace on every side. So I ask that you set your hand to the task he planned years ago."
..Actually, the LORD had said, "Will David build me a house for me to dwell in? What for?!? I have not lived in a house since the day that I brought up the children of Israel out of Egypt. I have vowed to travel with them, and have been moved around in a tent and in a tabernacle. In all places in which I have walked throughout Israel, did I ever say one word to any of the judges of Israel, who I commanded to be shepherd of my people Israel, asking them, 'Why have you not built me a house of cedar?'" But each generation tells itself history, and to Solomon, he was sure the LORD wanted this, and that war had been the only thing preventing it. Thus, he was determined to build one at all costs. So he told Hiram, "You will build a house for the name of the LORD my GOD, as the LORD spoke to David my father, saying, 'Your son, who I will set on your throne in your place, he will build the house for my name.'" Again, this is not actually what the LORD said, but rather, "I will raise up your descendant after you, who will come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. He will build a

---

[414] Sarcasm. Obviously, he wasn't wise enough to condemn slavery, though accusations that GOD feels the same are untrue.
[415] There is indeed great prosperity. But the Tao te Ching tells us that "when things flourish, they decline." And sure enough, we know of the decadence of Solomon's later years.
[416] This is not communism. It's the results of having extreme wealth, and using that wealth to provide for the public. *Noblesse oblige*, before it was cool
[417] Originally, it says "Solomon's wisdom" but this is crediting Solomon for GOD's gift.
[418] Sorry, 20th century culture reference. Jaden Smith once made a comment, "Trees are immortal so you can't surprise them. Think about that for a moment." This is also 'wisdom' about trees, but I assume the reader can tell the difference.

house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever." Even though there was no proof that this descendant referred to Solomon himself, he decided that he was the fulfillment of the words of the LORD, and so he justified his actions. So he told Hiram, "Now therefore command that they cut me cedar trees out of Lebanon. My servants will be with your servants, and I will give you wages according to all that you will say. For you know that there is not among us any who knows how to cut timber like the Sidonians."

When Hiram heard the words of Solomon, that he rejoiced greatly, and said, "Blessed is the LORD this day, who has given to David a wise son over this great people. I will satisfy all your desire concerning cedar wood and concerning the wood of evergreens. My servants will bring them down from Lebanon to the sea. I will make them into rafts to go by sea to the place that you will appoint me. And they will be assembled when you receive them. As for pay, you will accomplish my desire, in giving food for my household." So Hiram gave Solomon timber of cedar and timber of fir according to all his desire. And so it was that Solomon built the LORD a house of cedar, when the LORD made cedar to exist, and had no need of it.

As payment, Solomon gave Hiram twenty thousand cors of wheat for food to his household, and twenty thousand baths of pure oil. Solomon gave this to Hiram year by year. The LORD saw that even though this was definitely not what was needed, Solomon was earnest about it, and the LORD gave Solomon wisdom as he promised him. And there was peace between Hiram and Solomon, for the two made a covenant.

After this, King Solomon raised a levy out of all Israel, and the levy was thirty thousand men. He sent them to Lebanon, ten thousand a month by courses. Each man alternated, a month they were in Lebanon, and two months at home. And Adoniram governed the men that were subject to labor. Solomon also had seventy thousand who bore burdens, and eighty thousand who were stone cutters in the mountains. And besides Solomon's chief officers who were overseeing the work, there were three thousand and six hundred, who labored in the public works. As the king commanded, and they cut out great stones and mined fine gems, in order to lay the foundation of the house with worked stone. So it was that Solomon helped Hiram's builders prepare the timber and the stones to build the house of the LORD.

CHAPTER 6

In the four hundred and eightieth year after the children of Israel had come out of the land of Egypt (the fourth year of Solomon's reign over Israel), Solomon began to build the house of the LORD in the month of Ziv.[419]

And the house which King Solomon built for the LORD was one hundred three feet and four inches long, thirty-four feet and five inches wide, and fifty-one feet and eight inches high. And it had a porch that was as long as the width, thirty-four feet and five inches. And the building had windows of fixed lattices. And side rooms were built against the main sanctuary, and the building had added stories. The lowest story was eight feet and seven inches, the middle story was ten feet and four inches, and the third was twelve feet and one inch. And for the outside, he made offsets in the wall of the house all around, that the beams should not have hold in the walls of the house. It was built of stone prepared at the quarry, and neither hammer nor axe nor any tool of iron heard in the house, while it was in building. And the door for the lowest side-rooms was in the right side of the house, and they went up by winding stairs into the middle story then out of the middle into the third. So he built the house, and finished it, and he covered the house with beams and planks of cedar. He built the stories against all the house, each eight feet and seven inches high, and they rested on the house with timber of cedar.

After this, the word of the LORD came to Solomon, saying, "Concerning this house which you are building, I will permit it, so long as you will walk in my statutes, and keep all my commandments to walk in them. I will establish my word with you, which I spoke to David your father. Thus I will dwell among the children of Israel, and will not forsake my people Israel, as they keep my law."[420]

So Solomon built the house, and finished it. He built the walls of the house within with boards of

[419] Which is the second month for any non-Jews reading this.

[420] This is a conditional. If they betray the covenant, the temple will not stand, and the people can expect to be attacked or exiled.

cedar. From the floor of the house to the walls of the ceiling, he covered them on the inside with wood, and he covered the floor of the house with boards of fir. He built thirty-four feet and five inches on the back part of the house with boards of cedar from the floor to the beams, and he built this within as an inner sanctuary, the most holy place. In front of the temple sanctuary was sixty-eight feet and eleven inches.
And the inside of the house was cedar, carved with buds and open flowers. And all was cedar, there was no stone seen. He prepared an inner sanctuary within, to set there the ark of the covenant of the LORD. And before the sanctuary was thirty-four feet and five inches in length, and thirty-four feet and five inches in breadth, and thirty-four feet and five inches in its height; and he overlaid it with pure gold. So Solomon overlaid the house within with pure gold, and he drew chains of gold across, in front of the inner sanctuary, and he overlaid it with gold. In the inner sanctuary he made two cherubim of olive wood, each seventeen feet and three inches high.[421] The height of the one cherub was seventeen feet and three inches, and so was it of the other cherub. He set the cherubim within the inner house; and the wings of the cherubim were stretched forth, so that the wing of the one touched the one wall, and the wing of the other cherub touched the other wall. And he overlaid the cherubim with gold.
He carved all the walls of the house around with carved figures of cherubim and palm trees and open flowers, inside and outside. The floor of the house he overlaid with gold, inside and outside. For the entrance of the inner sanctuary he made doors of olive wood: the lintel and door posts were a fifth part of the wall. So he made two doors of olive wood, and he carved on them carvings of cherubim and palm trees and open flowers, then overlaid them with gold. And he spread the gold on the cherubim, and on the palm trees. So also he made for the entrance of the temple door posts of olive wood, out of a fourth part of the wall, and two doors of fir wood. The two leaves of the one door were folding, and the two leaves of the other door were folding. He carved cherubim and palm trees and open flowers; and he overlaid them with gold fitted on the engraved work.
He built the inner court with three courses of cut stone, and a course of cedar beams. In the fourth year was the foundation of the house of the LORD laid, in the month Ziv. In the eleventh year, in the month Bul, which is the eighth month, was the house finished throughout all its parts, and according to all its fashion. So was he seven years in building it.

CHAPTER 7

Solomon also built his own house thirteen years, and he finished all his house. For he built the house of wood from the forest of Lebanon. Its length was one hundred seventy-two feet and three inches, and its width eighty-six feet and two inches, and its height fifty-one feet and eight inches. And it was on four rows of cedar pillars, with cedar beams on the pillars. It was covered with cedar above atop the beams which were on the pillars, and the pillars numbered forty-five (there were fifteen in each row, in three rows). And window was over against window in three ranks. All the doors and posts were made square with beams. And it had a porch made with pillars, which had a length of eighty-six feet and two inches, and a width of fifty-one feet and eight inches, and there werw pillars and a threshold before them. This porch had a throne where he could sit to judge, and it was covered with cedar from floor to rafters. And the other court within the porch was of the like work. He made also a house for Pharaoh's daughter (who Solomon had taken as wife)[422] of the same design. And these buildings had costly stones, cut according to measure, of seventeen feet and three inches, of thirteen feet and nine inches.
King Solomon sent and fetched Hiram out of Tyre. He was the son of a widow of the tribe of Naphtali, and his father was a man of Tyre, a worker in bronze. And he was filled with wisdom and understanding and skill, to work all works in bronze. He came to Solomon, and performed all his work.[423]

---

[421] An architectural analysis of both the temple of Solomon and the Tabernacle show a symbolic theme. The Tabernacle is supposed to represent the Garden of Eden, and how there is GOD's presence (Holy of Holies), then mankind's presence in the Garden. And then outside the garden, after being cast out, the path is guarded by cherubim and flaming sword. So, moving back east to west, the priest enters the temple in effect re-entering the Garden, passing two cherubim. The temple was modeled after this idea.
[422] Part of Solomon's downfall was that to secure peace, he married the leaders of other lands. This symbolically broke the covenant against foreign wives.
[423] Here is describes the temple. I have no use for this. The temple, as we later saw with JESUS, had become a monstrous idol

Thus all the work that Solomon performed in the house of the LORD was finished. Solomon brought in the things which David his father had dedicated, the silver, and the gold, and the vessels, and put them in the treasuries of the temple of the LORD.

CHAPTER 8

Solomon assembled the elders of Israel in Jerusalem, in order to bring up the ark of the covenant of the LORD out of the City of David. All the men of Israel assembled themselves to King Solomon at the feast, in the month Ethanim.[424] Then all the elders of Israel came, and the priests took up the ark. They brought up the ark of the LORD, and the Tent of Meeting, and all the holy vessels that were in the Tent. And the priests and the Levites brought them up to the house of the LORD. King Solomon and all the congregation of Israel were with him before the ark, and they sacrificed sheep and cattle to such a number that it could not be counted.

After that, the priests brought in the ark of the covenant of the LORD to its place, into the inner sanctuary of the house, to the most holy place, past the wings of the cherubim. For the cherubim spread forth their wings over the place of the ark, and the cherubim covered the ark and its poles above. The poles were so long that the ends of the poles were seen from the holy place before the inner sanctuary, but they were not seen outside. Inside the the ark except the two tablets of stone which Moses put there at Sinai, when the LORD made a covenant with the children of Israel after they came out of the land of Egypt.

When the priests had come out of the holy place, a cloud filled the house of the LORD, so that the priests could not stand there because of the cloud, for the glory of the LORD filled the house of the LORD. Solomon said, "The LORD has said that he would dwell in the thick cloud. I have surely built you a house of habitation, a place for you to dwell in." After that, the king turned his face about and blessed all the assembly of Israel, and there all the assembly of Israel stood.

Solomon said, "Blessed is the LORD, the GOD of Israel, who spoke with his mouth to David your father, and has with his hand fulfilled it. Since the day that the LORD brought Israel out of Egypt, he chose no city out of all the tribes of Israel to build a house, nor was any chosen to be a leader over Israel. But the LORD has chosen Jerusalem, so that his name may be there, and has chosen David to be over Israel. And it was in the heart of David my father to build a house for the name of the LORD, the GOD of Israel. But the LORD said to David my father, that this was not to be. So now I have risen up in the place of David my father, and I sit on the throne of Israel, as the LORD promised, and have built the house for the name of the LORD, the GOD of Israel. There I have set a place for the ark, in which is the covenant of the LORD, which he made with our fathers, when he brought them out of the land of Egypt."

Solomon stood before the altar of the LORD in the presence of all the assembly of Israel, and spread forth his hands toward Heaven. Now Solomon had made a bronze scaffold, eight feet and seven inches long, and eight feet and seven inches broad, and five feet and two inches high, and had set it in the midst of the court; and on it he stood, knelt down before all the assembly of Israel, and spread forth his hands toward Heaven.

And this is the prayer that he prayed, "LORD, the GOD of Israel, there is no GOD like you, none like you in Heaven above or on Earth beneath. You keep the covenant and give loving kindness to us, all those who walk before you with all their heart. You have kept with David my father that which you promised him. You spoke with your mouth, and have fulfilled it with your hand. Now therefore, let the LORD, the GOD of Israel, honor my father what you have promised him, when you said, 'There will not fail you a man in my sight to sit on the throne of Israel, if your children take heed to their way, to walk before me as you have walked before me.' LORD, GOD of Israel, let your word be verified, which you spoke to David my father. But will GOD in very deed dwell on Earth? Heaven can't contain you, so how much less can this house that I have built."

And in this prayer, Solomon briefly realized that the temple he was building was an attempt at his

---

responsible for the lives of many Jews and especially their animals. Still, this one was much better than the temple Herod built. As a side note, Hiram is mentioned as a king of Tyre earlier, but here is described as a son of the tribe of Naphtali. I suspect this is a contradiction.

[424] During the month of Ethanim, the seventh month, about three festival take place: Rosh Hashanah (Feast of Trumpets), Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement), and Sukkot (Feast of Tents). It is commonly thought that he moved this during the Feast of Tents.

own immortality, not truly to honor GOD.[425] But folly travels with arrogance, and he brushed this notion aside. On some level, he truly wanted to please GOD, and what can you get for one who has everything? So he continued his prayer, "Yet have respect for the prayer and petition, LORD my GOD, to listen to the cry and to the prayer before you this day. That your eyes may be open toward this house night and day, toward the place of which you have said, 'My name will be there,' so that you might listen to the prayer toward this place. Listen to petition of your people Israel, when they will pray toward this place, and when you hear that you will forgive. If a man sins against his neighbor, and an oath is laid on him to cause him to swear, and he comes and swear before your altar in this house then hear in Heaven and do. Justify the righteous and condemn the wicked, to give each according to his righteousness. When your people Israel are struck down before the enemy, it is because they have sinned against you; likewise, if they turn again to you and confess your name, if they pray and make petition to you in this house, then hear in Heaven. Forgive the sin of your people Israel, and bring them again to the land which you gave to their fathers."
He continued, "When the sky is shut up and there is no rain because they have sinned against you, if they turn from their sin and confess your name then pray toward this place (after you punish them), then hear in Heaven and forgive the sin of your people Israel. Teach them the good way in which they should walk and send rain on your land, which you have given to your people for an inheritance. If there is famine in the land or there is pestilence, if there is blight, mildew, locust or caterpillar, even if their enemy besieges them in the land of their gates (indeed whatever prayer and petition is made by any man), any who spread forth his hands toward this house will know that you hear in Heaven and forgive. You render to every man according to all his ways, whose heart you know, that they may fear you all the days that they live in the land which you gave to our fathers. Even the foreigner, who is not of your people Israel, if he will come out of a far country for your name's sake, when he will come and pray toward this house, let it be that you do according to all that the foreigner calls to you for. In this way, let all the peoples of Earth may know your name and fear you as do your people Israel, that they may know that this house which I have built is called by your name. And if your people go out to battle against their enemy and they pray to the LORD toward the house in the city which you have chosen, then hear in Heaven their prayer and their petition and maintain their cause. If they sin against you (for there is no man who doesn't sin), and you deliver them to the enemy so that they are carried away captive to the land of the enemy, but then later they repent and pray to you with all their heart and soul in the land of their enemies, then hear their prayer and their petition in Heaven and maintain their cause.[426] Forgive your people who have sinned against you and give them compassion before those who carried them captive, that they may also have compassion on them (for they are your people you brought out of Egypt, and rescue from the midst of an iron furnace),[427] that your eyes and your ears may be open to petition, to listen to them whenever they cry to you. For you consecrated[428] them from among all the peoples of Earth to be your inheritance, as you spoke by Moses when you brought our fathers out of Egypt, LORD GOD." And thus Solomon ended his prayer. When Solomon had made an end of praying all this prayer and petition to the LORD, he arose from before the altar of the LORD, from kneeling on his knees with his hands spread forth toward Heaven.
Then he stood and blessed all the assembly of Israel with a loud voice, "Blessed be the LORD, who has given rest to his people Israel, according to all that he promised. There has not failed one word of all his good promise, which he promised by Moses. May the LORD our GOD be with us, as he was with our fathers. Let him not leave us nor forsake us, that he may incline our hearts to him to walk in all his ways, and to keep his commandments which he commanded our fathers. Let these my words, with

---

[425] If it seems like I'm being overly hard on Solomon, it's because reports of his wisdom are greatly exaggerated. Yes, truly, GOD gave him wisdom. But wisdom, like courage, is something that must grow in the midst of its opposition. If you would be courageous, you have to deal with fear. If you are wise, a fair amount of folly happens. This particular project is very much like my project to edit the Bible. It's a vanity project, and I'm not sure anything will come of it. All of us undertake such immortality goals, because we fear death. But the only one who really succeeded at that end was JESUS. The rest of us hope for an Afterlife. In the end, Solomon is no wiser than the rest of us.
[426] These are awful run-on sentences, by the way. I'm having trouble deciding how to restructure what he's saying.
[427] This bit is prophetic, as the events of Daniel happen after the exile of the Jews.
[428] The text said "separate" but to consecrate is to separate in order for a holy purpose to be done. I like the parallel between the people of Israel, and their temple.

which I have made petition before the LORD, be near to the LORD our GOD day and night, that he may maintain the cause of his people Israel. Let all the peoples of Earth may know that the LORD, he is GOD. There is no other. And let your heart therefore be perfect with the LORD our GOD, to walk in his statutes, and to keep his commandments, as at this day."
So the king and all Israel with him offered sacrifice before the LORD. Solomon offered twenty-two thousand head of cattle and one hundred twenty thousand sheep for the sacrifice of peace offerings. The same day the king made the middle of the court holy before the house of the LORD, offering the burnt offering and the meal offering, as well as the fat of the peace offerings. But the bronze altar that was before the LORD was too little to receive all these offerings. So Solomon held the feast at that time with all Israel from Lebo Hamath to the Wadi of Egypt. And before the LORD our GOD in the house which he built, all ate and drank. And they rejoiced before the LORD our GOD for seven days and nights. And on the eighth day he sent the people away, and they blessed the king. They went to their tents joyful for all the goodness that the LORD had shown to David and Solomon and to Israel.

CHAPTER 9

When Solomon had finished the building of the house of the LORD and the king's house, and Solomon had done all desire which he was pleased to do, the LORD appeared to Solomon the second time as he had appeared to him at Gibeon.
And the LORD said to him, "I have heard your prayer and your petition that you have made before me. And I have done for you according to all your prayer. I have consecrated this house which you have built, to place my name there, and my eyes and my heart will be there. As for you, if you will walk before me as David your father walked in integrity of heart and uprightness, and will keep my statutes and my ordinances, then I will establish the throne of your kingdom over Israel forever according to my promise to David, 'There will not fail you a man on the throne of Israel.' But if you turn away from following me, you or your children, and not keep my commandments which I have set before you, but serve other gods and worship them, then will I cut off Israel out of the land which I have given them. And this house, which I have made holy for my name, will I cast out of my sight. And Israel will be a proverb and a byword among all peoples. This house, which is exalted, will become a heap of ruins. Those who pass be will ask, 'Why has the LORD done this to this land, and to this house?' And others will answer, 'Because they forsook the LORD their GOD, who brought their fathers out of the land of Egypt, and worshiped other gods. Therefore the LORD has brought all this disaster on them.'"
At the end of twenty years, after Solomon had built the two houses, Solomon gave Hiram twenty cities in the land of Galilee. Now despite this generosity, Hiram came out from Tyre to see the cities which Solomon had given him, and they did not please him. He said, "What cities are these which you have given me, brother?" He called them the land of Cabul even to this day. Even so, Hiram sent to the king one hundred twenty talents of gold.
And Solomon had raised a levy to build the house of the LORD and his own house, and he also built Millo, the wall of Jerusalem, Hazor, Megiddo, and Gezer. But Pharaoh of Egypt had taken Gezer, and he burnt it with fire. He killed the Canaanites who lived in the city, and given it for a portion to his daughter, Solomon's wife.
As for all the people who were left of the Amorites, the Hethites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites (who were not of the children of Israel), their descendants were left after them in the land (because the children of Israel were not able utterly to destroy them), so Solomon conscripted them for slave labor. But of the children of Israel, Solomon made no bondservants, instead he hired men of war as his commanders, captains, and rulers of his chariots and horsemen. These chief officers who were over Solomon's work numbered five hundred fifty, and these ruled over the people who labored in the work.
King Solomon also made a navy of ships in Ezion Geber, which is beside Eilat, on the shore of the Red Sea, in the land of Edom. And Hiram sent in the navy his servants, sailors who had knowledge of the sea, with the servants of Solomon. They came to Ophir, and fetched from there gold, four hundred and twenty talents, and brought it to King Solomon. The navy from Hiram that brought gold from Ophir, also brought in from Ophir great plenty of almug trees[429] and precious stones. So the king

[429] Probably red sandalwood.

made of these pillars for the house of the LORD, and for the king's house, harps also and stringed instruments for the singers. None were as these which Hiram gave in almug trees to Solomon, nor were even seen again to this day.

CHAPTER 10

Now the queen of Sheba heard of the fame of Solomon concerning the name of the LORD, she came to test him with hard questions. And she came to Jerusalem with a very great entourage, carrying camels that bore spices, a great deal of gold, and precious stones. When she had come to Solomon, she talked with him of all that was in her heart.

Solomon told her all her questions: there was not anything hidden from the king which he did not tell her. When the queen of Sheba had seen all the wisdom of Solomon, the house that he had built, the food of his table, his servants, his ministers, their clothing, his cup bearers, his musical instruments, and his burnt offerings which he presented at the house of the LORD, these things left her breathless. She said to the king, "It was a true report that I heard in my own land of your acts, and of your wisdom. However, I did not believe the words until I came, and my eyes had seen it. The half was not told me. Your wisdom and prosperity exceed the fame which I heard. Happy are your wives, happy are these who stand continually before you, who hear your wisdom. Blessed is the LORD your GOD, who delighted in you, to set you on the throne of Israel. Because of the LORD's everlasting love for Israel, therefore he made you king, to do justice and righteousness." But she also warned him, "Your GOD clearly gives you wisdom and all such other things that pleases him. But I wish to know if it is possible for you to live as a wise man for as long you are alive, for there has seldom been a country whose king has not been corrupted in some way. Many who are rich are corrupted by wealth, many who are powerful are corrupted by their power, and many indeed fall astray to their mistresses or to their desires." And with these words, she warned Solomon, if he would listen. So Solomon said, "Queen of Sheba, I know that if I continue faithful to my GOD, I will stay a man of virtue."

And when she left, she gave the king one hundred twenty talents of gold, spices of very great store, and many precious stones. Of spices that others gave him, none were as these which the queen of Sheba gave to Solomon. And she stopped at the altar, and offered incense to the LORD as she left.

So King Solomon gave to the queen of Sheba all her desire, whatever she asked, besides that which Solomon gave her of his royal bounty. So she turned, and went to her own land, she and her servants.

Now the weight of gold that came to Solomon in one year was six hundred sixty-six talents of gold, besides that which the traders brought, and the traffic of the merchants, and of all the kings of Arabia, and of the governors of the country. King Solomon made two hundred large shields of beaten gold which were six hundred shekels of gold went to each shield. He made three hundred shields of beaten gold which were three minas of gold to one shield, and the king put them in the house of the forest of Lebanon.

Moreover the king made a great throne of ivory, and overlaid it with the finest gold. There were six steps to the throne, and the top of the throne was round behind. And on either side by the place of the seat, two lions standing beside. He also built twelve lions on the one side and on the other on the six steps. And there was nothing like it made in any kingdom.

And all King Solomon's drinking vessels were of gold, and washing vessels were of gold, and all the vessels of the house of the forest of Lebanon were of pure gold. None were of silver; it was not considered anything in the days of Solomon.

So King Solomon exceeded all the kings of Earth in riches and in wisdom. All Earth sought the presence of Solomon, to hear his wisdom, which GOD had put in his heart. They brought every man his tribute, vessels of silver, and vessels of gold, and clothing, and armor, and spices, horses, and mules, a rate year by year.

The king gathered silver to be in Jerusalem as stones, and cedars were as the sycamore trees that are in the lowland for abundance.

For the king had at sea a navy of Tarshish with the navy of Hiram: once every three years came the navy of Tarshish, bringing gold, and silver, ivory, and apes, and peacocks. Solomon gathered together chariots and horsemen: and he had a thousand and four hundred chariots, and twelve thousand horsemen, that he bestowed in the chariot cities, and with the king at Jerusalem. The horses which Solomon had were brought out of Egypt and Kue; and the king's merchants received them from Kue

at a price. And came up and went out of Egypt a chariot for six hundred pieces of silver, and a horse for one hundred fifty; and so for all the kings of the Hethites, and for the kings of Aram, they brought them out by their means.

CHAPTER 11

And deep within Solomon's heart, the words of the queen of Sheba echoed, "But I wish to know if it is possible for you to live as a wise man for as long you are alive, for there has seldom been a country whose king has not been corrupted in some way." Now Solomon was not corrupted by wealth, and he was not corrupted by his power.

But Solomon loved women, unfortunately. And he took many foreign women, the daughter of Pharaoh, women of the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Sidonians, and Hethites. And these women, though very beautiful, were also women of the nations concerning which the LORD said to the children of Israel, "You will not go among them, for surely they will turn away your heart after their gods." Yet Solomon clung to these in love. He had seven hundred wives, many of who were princesses, and three hundred secondary wives or mistresses. And his wives turned away his heart from GOD.

When Solomon was old, his wives turned away his heart after other gods, and his heart was not perfect with the LORD his GOD. So Solomon went after Ashtoreth (Ishtar) the goddess of the Sidonians, and after Chemosh the abomination of the Moabites, and after Milcom the abomination of the Ammonites. And Solomon did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD, and did not follow after the LORD, as did David his father. Then Solomon at the advice of his mistresses was asked if she could build an altar within Jerusalem, but he had the presence of mind to tell her it was forbidden within the city gates. But she asked, "What about outside Jerusalem?" And so it was that he built her a high place for Chemosh on the mountain that is before Jerusalem, and for another Milcom an altar, and for another Ashtoreth got an altar. So he did for all his foreign wives, who burnt incense and sacrificed to their gods.

The LORD was angry with Solomon, because his heart had turned away from the LORD, the GOD of Israel, who had appeared to him twice, and had commanded him concerning this thing, that he should not go after other gods. But he did not obey that which the LORD commanded. Therefore the LORD said to Solomon, "Because this is done by you, and you have not kept my covenant, I will surely tear the kingdom from you. Nevertheless, I will not do it in your days, for David your father's sake. Instead, your children will lose you your kingdom. Even so, I will not tear away all the kingdom. I will give one tribe to your son, for David's sake, and for Jerusalem's sake which I have chosen."

So it was that the LORD raised up an adversary to Solomon, Hadad the Edomite. He was of the royal line in Edom. Even though David had conquered Edom and Joab the commander of the army had struck every male in Edom, Hadad had fled. And now he and certain Edomites of his father's servants were with him, to go into Egypt, when Hadad was yet a little child. So they arose out of Midian and came to Paran, and they took men with them out of Paran then they came to Egypt. And they talked to Pharaoh of Egypt, who gave them a house, food, and land. And Hadad found great favor in the sight of Pharaoh, so that he gave him as wife the sister of his own wife, the sister of Tahpenes the queen.

When Hadad heard in Egypt that David slept with his fathers, and that Joab the commander of the army was dead, Hadad said to Pharaoh, "Let me depart, that I may go to my own country." Then Pharaoh said to him, "But what have you lacked with me, that you seek to go to your own country?" He answered, "Nothing, however only let me depart." And it did not matter that one of his wives was a princess of Egypt, for this would not secure Egypt's aid against Edom.

GOD also raised up an adversary to him, Rezon the son of Eliada, who had fled from his lord Hadadezer king of Zobah. He gathered men to himself and became leader of a marauding band when David killed them. And they went to Damascus, and lived there, and reigned in Damascus. He was an adversary to Israel all the days of Solomon, besides the evil Hadad. And he loathed Israel, and reigned over Aram.

Jeroboam the son of Nebat (an Ephraimite of Zeredah, a servant of Solomon, whose mother's name was Zeruah) also lifted up his hand against the king. As to why he betrayed his king... Solomon built Millo and repaired the breach of the City of David his father, and Solomon saw that the young man was mighty and of valor, and that he was industrious. So he put him in charge of all the labor of the

house of Joseph. But when Jeroboam went out of Jerusalem, and the prophet Ahijah the Shilonite found him on the way and caused him to turn aside out of the way. Now he had dressed himself with a new garment, and the two were alone in the countryside. And Ahijah laid hold of the new garment that was on him, and tore it in twelve pieces. He said to Jeroboam, "Take ten pieces, for thus says the LORD, the GOD of Israel, 'I will tear the kingdom out of the hand of Solomon, and will give ten tribes to you (but he will have one tribe, for David's sake and for Jerusalem's sake, the city which I have chosen out of all the tribes of Israel) because he has forsaken me, and has allowed worship of Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians, Chemosh the god of Moab, and Milcom the god of the people of Ammon. And he has not walked in my ways, to do that which is right in my eyes, as David his father did. However, I will not take the whole kingdom out of his hand, but I will make him prince all the days of his life, for David sake, but I will take the kingdom out of his children's hand, and will give to you ten tribes. To his son will I give one tribe, that David may have a lamp always before me in Jerusalem, the city which I have chosen me to put my name there. I will take you, and you will reign according to all that you desire, and will be king over Israel. If you will listen to all that I command you and do that which is right in my eyes, as David did, then I will be with you and will build you a sure house as I built for David, and will give Israel to you. I will for this afflict the offspring of David, but not forever.' Thus says the LORD." And Jeroboam so turned against Solomon. Solomon sought therefore to kill Jeroboam, but Jeroboam arose and fled into Egypt, and he remained there until the death of Solomon. Solomon reigned in Jerusalem forty years.

Then Solomon slept with his fathers, and was buried in the City of David his father.

KINGS

CHAPTER 1

After Solomon died, a long sequence of kings, both good and wicked followed in his wake. First, he was succeeded by Rehoboam. The elders came and told Rehoboam, "Your father oppressed our people greatly. We want to know whether you will do the same, or lighten our oppression." And they made it known that if their oppression loosened, they would be loyal people. Rehoboam told them to give three days to make a decision.

But Rehoboam was a gutless loser who took poor council. After listening to experienced older men who had experienced Solomon's rule, who told him that he should do as they said. But he also heard some brash younger people, who told him to double down on the harsh treatment that his father gave them. These men had grown up with him, so it didn't matter to him that anyone else would decide they were fools.

So it was that the king did not listen to the people, so Israel cut itself off from the house of David, seeing that they had no inheritance with the people of Jesse. Rehoboam ruled over the cities of Judah, while Jeroboam ruled over Israel. So Israel became divided between north and south, with Judah in the south and Israel in the north. And each justified themselves in their own eyes, considering the other to be false children of GOD. And Israel was divided into tribes, with Israel accusing Judah of misdeed while Judah in turn accused Israel. So each side saw wickedness in the other, and Israel was not one nation under GOD.[430]

And Rehoboam tried to send Adoram to put the people of Israel to forced labor, but they stoned him to death. So this "king" Rehoboam got in his chariot and fled to Jerusalem. And so it was that Israel had enough of the house of David, and rebelled. And Rehoboam assembled the people of Judah and the tribe of Benjamin to fight Israe, and there were one hundred and eighty men ready to retake Israel for Rehoboam. But the word of the LORD came to the prophet Shemaiah the man of GOD, "You will not go up, nor fight against your brothers, the children of Israel. Everyone return to his house. This separation is my intention." And the people of Judah listened to the word of the LORD, and returned and went their way, according to the word of the LORD.

---

[430] I borrowed the phrase "one nation under GOD" from the American Pledge of Allegiance. The point being, this set off the separation between Israel and Judea, and eventually between the Jews and the Samaritans. But the Samaritans, the Canaanites, the Edomites, and a few others? They're actually the people of Israel! They might have sinned, yes. But this smear about Jeroboam committing idolatry in the next part might not even be true. The Jews are indeed the Chosen People of GOD. But outside of propaganda, we have no idea who GOD chooses. He many intend Israel for everyone who loves it.

But Jeroboam feared that the people would return to Rehoboam as king and he would be killed, so he caved to the desires of the people. And the people turned to idols, so Jeroboam placed one golden calf in Bethel and one in Dan. He said to the people, "It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem. Look and see your gods, Israel, which brought you up out of the land of Egypt." And he ordered a feast in the eighth month, on the fifteenth day of the month, like the feast of Passover, but he sacrificed to these idols.

Then there came a man of GOD out of Judah by the word of the LORD to Bethel, when Jeroboam was standing by the altar to burn incense. He prophesied against the altar by the word of the LORD, saying, "Altar, altar, hear these words from the LORD. A son will be born to the house of David. On you, he will sacrifice the priests of the high places who burn incense on you, and they will burn men's bones on you." But they asked him for a sign to prove what he said. He told them, "This is the sign which the LORD has spoken: The altar will be split apart, and the ashes that are on the altar will be poured out."

When Jeroboam heard these words, he said, "Seize him." But when he moved his hand against him, it withered, and he could not move it. At that came moment, the altar also was split apart and the ashes poured out from the altar, according to the sign which the man of GOD had given by the word of the LORD. So this king pleaded with the man of GOD, "May the favor of the LORD your GOD be shown and pray for me, that my hand may be restored me again." The man of GOD entreated the LORD, and this king's hand was restored him again, and became as it was before. And Jeroboam offered to give him a reward if he would return home with him. But the man told him that the LORD had commanded him to eat or drink nothing from him, nor enter his house.

And an old prophet in Bethel learned of this from his sons. And the prophet wanted to speak to him, and asked his sons where he went. Then he saddled his donkey to ride out to meet him. And he found him sitting under and oak, and asked him, "Are you the man of GOD who came from Judah? The one who spoke to Jeroboam?"

The man said, "I am." And he offered him bread, but he would not eat from the prophet either.

But the prophet lied and told him that an angel spoke to him by the word of the LORD, and told him to return to his house. For he much desired to speak with him. So the man went back with him, and ate bread in his house, and drank water. But as they sat at the table, the word of the LORD came to the prophet who brought him back, and he told the man of GOD who came from Judah, saying, "Because you have been disobedient to the mouth of the LORD, and have not kept the commandment which the LORD your GOD commanded you, but came back and have eaten bread and drunk water, you will not return home alive.'" And after he had eaten and drunk, he saddled the donkey for the prophet. And when the man of GOD had left, a lion met him on the path and mauled him to death.[431] But the lion would not eat his body. And when the neither would it eat the donkey of the man of GOD. And both the donkey and the lion stood over the body. When people saw it, they asked the old prophet, and he said, "This is the man of GOD who was disobedient to the mouth of the LORD. Therefore the LORD has delivered him to the lion, which has mauled him and slain him, according to the word of the LORD, which he spoke to him."

Then the prophet collected the body of the man of GOD, and brought him back home. And he came to the city of the old prophet to mourn and to bury him. He laid his body in his own grave and they mourned over him. After he had buried him, that he told his sons, "When I am dead, then bury me in the tomb in which the man of GOD is buried. Lay my bones beside his bones. For the saying which he proclaimed by the word of the LORD against the altar in Bethel, and against all the houses of the high places which are in the cities of Samaria, will surely happen. And I am responsible for his death."

And Jeroboam heard of this strange event and perceived it was directed against him, for he listened to the words of men, not of GOD. Even so, Jeroboam did not return from his evil way, but again made priests of the high places from among all the people. He consecrated anyone who wanted to be a priest at the high places.

CHAPTER 2

[431] What the actual fuck. So a prophet tricks a man of GOD, then punishes him?!? This probably wins the award for weirdest passage that doesn't involve angels or giants.

After this, Jeroboam's son got sick. Jeroboam said to his wife, "Please get up and disguise yourself, that you won't be recognized as the wife of Jeroboam. Go to Shiloh. There is a prophet Ahijah,[432] who spoke concerning me that I should be king over this people. Take with you ten loaves, some cakes, and a jar of honey, and go to him. He will tell you what will become of the child."
So Jeroboam's wife, who had long beautiful hair that was distinctive and the fine clothing of nobility, bought a sheitel[433] and tucked her hair under it, and bought clothing from the and she gave her gold and jewelry to cover the cost, for it was conspicuous. And so it was that she pretended to be another woman. Then she went to Shiloh where the prophet was.
The prophet could not see because he was old, so her disguise meant nothing to him. Instead, the LORD said to the prophet, "The wife of Jeroboam comes to inquire of you concerning her son, for he is sick. When she comes in, that she will pretend to be another woman." Then the prophet heard her footsteps and told her, "Come in, you wife of Jeroboam. Why do you pretend to be another? But I have bad news. The LORD says to Jeroboam that he exalted him, made him prince over Israel, and tore the kingdom from David. But he has failed to be obedient like David was, and he has not loved him with his heart. Instead, he made molten idols, so the LORD will bring disaster on the house of Jeroboam. He who dies of Jeroboam in the city will the dogs eat and he who dies in the field will the birds of the sky eat. Arise therefore, and go to your house. When your feet enter into the city, the child will die. All Israel will mourn for him, and bury him. The LORD will raise up a king over Israel, who will cut off the house of Jeroboam. For the LORD will strike Israel, as a reed is shaken in the water; and he will root up Israel out of this good land which he gave to their fathers, and will scatter them beyond the River, because they have made idols, provoking the LORD to anger. He will give Israel up because of the sins of Jeroboam, which he has sinned, and with which he has made Israel to sin."
And Jeroboam's wife mourned before she even left the house, for she knew the prophet's words were true. And she took off her sheitel, and she shaved her head and wore nothing but sack cloth, and walked home without a horse or donkey and without sandals.[434] And she came back to Tirzah, and the moment she crossed to the threshold of the city, the child died. All Israel buried him, and mourned for him, according to the word of the LORD, which he spoke by his servant the prophet.
The days which Jeroboam reigned were twenty-two years: and he slept with his fathers, and Nadab his son reigned in his place.[435]

CHAPTER 3

Now in the eighteenth year of King Jeroboam, Abijam began to reign over Judah. He reigned three years in Jerusalem: and his mother's name was Maacah the daughter of Abishalom. He walked in all the sins of his father, and his heart was not perfect with the LORD his GOD, unlike David. Nevertheless, for David's sake, the LORD GOD allowed him in Jerusalem, to set up his son, and to establish Jerusalem. After all, David did that which was right in the eyes of the LORD, and did not turn aside from anything that he commanded him all the days of his life, except only in the matter of Uriah the Hethite. Even so, there was war between Abijam and Jeroboam. Eventually, Abijam slept with his fathers, and they buried him in the City of David.
Then in the twentieth year of Jeroboam, King of Israel, Asa began to reign over Judah. He reigned forty-one years in Jerusalem, and his mother's name was Maacah. Asa did that which was right in the eyes of the LORD, as did David. He banished the male temple prostitutes out of the land, and removed all the idols that his fathers had made. He also removed his mother Maacah from being queen, because she had made an abominable image for an Asherah. And Asa cut down the Asherah, and burnt it at the brook Kidron. But the high places were not taken away; even so, the heart of Asa was perfect with the LORD all his days. He brought into the house of the LORD the things that his father had dedicated, and the things that himself had dedicated, silver, and gold, and vessels. Even so, there was war between Asa and Baasha, King of Israel, all their days. Baasha King went up against Judah, and built Ramah, that he might not allow anyone to go out or come in to Asa, King of Judah.

---

[432] His son's name is Abijah. The prophet's name is Ahijah. No, we're not doing that.
[433] A wig worn by married Jewish women for modesty.
[434] An addition. But I figured it would be likely, given that she *already* was mourning.
[435] There's a bizarre addition after this where they sum up his life and deeds again, and then name a different heir Abijam? I feel like this was written from garbled or patchy records, and some of it was cobbled together.

Then Asa took all the silver and the gold that were left in the treasures of the house of the LORD, and the treasures of the king's house, and delivered them into the hand of his servants. King Asa sent them to Ben Hadad, the son of Tabrimmon, the son of Hezion, King of Aram,[436] who lived at Damascus, saying, "Let there be a treaty between me and you, between my father and your father. I have sent to you a present of silver and gold. Go, break your treaty with Baasha, King of Israel, that he may depart from me."
Ben Hadad listened to king Asa, and sent the captains of his armies against the cities of Israel, and struck Ijon, and Abel Beth Maacah, and all Kinnereth, with all the land of Naphtali. Ben Hadad, King of Aram gathered all his army together, and there were thirty-two kings with him, and horses and chariots; and he went up and besieged Samaria, and fought against it. He sent messengers to the king of Israel, into the city, and said to him, "Thus says Ben Hadad, 'Your silver and your gold is mine. Your wives also and your children, even the best, are mine.'" And the king of Israel answered, "It is according to your saying, my lord, O king. I am yours, and all that I have."
The messengers came again, and said, "You will deliver me your silver, and your gold, and your wives, and your children, but I will send my servants to you tomorrow about this time, and they will search your house and the houses of your servants. Whatever is pleasant in their eyes, they will put it in their hand, and take it away." Then the king of Israel called all the elders of the land, and said, "Please notice how this man seeks mischief, for he sent to me for my wives, and for my children, and for my silver, and for my gold. And I did not deny him." All the elders and all the people said to him, "Do not listen, neither consent." So he refused. The messengers departed, and brought him back the message. Ben Hadad sent to him, and said, "The gods do so to me, and more also, if the dust of Samaria will suffice for handfuls for all the people who follow me." The king of Israel answered, "Do not let him who puts on his armor brag like he who takes it off." When Ben Hadad heard this message, as he was drinking, he and the kings, in the pavilions, that he said to his servants, "Prepare to attack." They prepared to attack the city.
When Baasha heard of all this, he left off building Ramah, and lived in Tirzah. Then King Asa made a proclamation to all Judah. None was exempted. And they carried away the stones of Ramah and its timber with which Baasha had built. And King Asa built there with Geba of Benjamin and Mizpah. But in the time of his old age he was diseased in his feet.
Then Asa slept with his fathers, and was buried with his fathers in the City of David his father; and Jehoshaphat his son reigned in his place.
Nadab the son of Jeroboam began to reign over Israel in the second year of Asa, King of Judah, and he reigned over Israel two years. He did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD, and walked in the way of his father, and in his sin with which he made Israel to sin. Baasha, son of Ahijah conspired against him, and Baasha struck him at Gibbethon, which belonged to the Philistines; for Nadab and all Israel were laying siege to Gibbethon.
In the third year of Asa, Baasha killed Nadab and reigned in his place. As soon as he was king, he struck all the house of Jeroboam. He did not leave to Jeroboam any who breathed, until he had destroyed him, according to the saying of the LORD, which he spoke by his servant Ahijah the Shilonite, that for the sins of Jeroboam which he sinned and with which he made Israel to sin which provoked the LORD to anger. The word of the LORD came to Jehu the son of Hanani, "Because I exalted you out of the dust, and made you ruler over my people Israel, and you have walked in the way of Jeroboam, and have made my people Israel to sin, to provoke me to anger with their sins, I will utterly sweep away your house, and I will make your house like the house of Jeroboam the son of Nebat. The dogs will eat your descendants who die in the city; and he who dies of his in the field the birds of the sky will eat."[437] After this, Baasha slept with his fathers, and was buried in Tirzah; and Elah his son reigned in his place.
After this, Elah the son of Baasha began to reign over Israel in Tirzah for two years. But his servant Zimri conspired against him. Now he was in Tirzah, drinking himself drunk in the house of Arza, who was over the household in Tirzah. And Zimri went in and struck him, and killed him, in the twenty-

[436] Aram is the region around Syria.
[437] There appeared to be an error. Baasha is shown sweeping away the evil of Asa, then it feels like the writer got mixed up, as it mentions Baasha suddenly being evil, and the prophet mentioning Baasha negatively.

seventh year of Asa King of Judah, and reigned in his place. It happened, when he began to reign, as soon as he sat on his throne, that he struck all the house of Baasha: he did not leave him a single one who urinates on a wall, neither of his relatives, nor of his friends.
Thus Zimri destroyed all the house of Baasha.[438] Zimri reigned seven days in Tirzah. Now the people were camped against Gibbethon, which belonged to the Philistines. The people who were camped heard it said, "Zimri has conspired, and has also struck the king." Therefore all Israel made Omri, the captain of the army, king over Israel that day in the camp. Omri went up from Gibbethon, and all Israel with him, and they besieged Tirzah. When Zimri saw that the city was taken, that he went into the citadel of the king's house, and burnt the king's house over him with fire, and died, for his sins which he sinned in doing that which was evil in the sight of the LORD, in walking in the way of Jeroboam.
Then were the people of Israel divided into two parts: half of the people followed Tibni the son of Ginath and wished to make him king, while the other half followed Omri. But the people who followed Omri prevailed against the people who followed Tibni. So Tibni died, and Omri became king in the place of Tibni. Omri began to reign over Israel for twelve years. He reigned six years in Tirzah. He bought a hill for two talents of silver and he built on the hill, and he called the name of the land which he built after the name of Shemer (the owner of the hill), Samaria.[439] So Omri slept with his fathers, and was buried in Samaria. And Ahab his son reigned in his place.
So Ahab the son of Omri began to reign over Israel, and Ahab the son of Omri reigned over Israel in Samaria twenty-two years. And Ahab the son of Omri did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD above all that were before him. As if it had been a light thing for him to walk in the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, he took as wife Jezebel the daughter of Ethbaal king of the Sidonians, and went and served Baal, and worshiped him. He raised up an altar for Baal, which he had built in Samaria. And Ahab made the Asherah, and Ahab did yet more to provoke the LORD of Israel to wrath than all the kings of Israel who were before him.

CHAPTER 4

And the LORD spoke through Elijah the Tishbite to Ahab, "As the LORD, the GOD of Israel lives, there will not be dew nor rain these years, except by my word." And the word of the LORD came to him, saying, "Go away from here, turn eastward, and hide yourself by the Wadi Cherith, that is near the Jordan. And it will be that you will drink from the spring. And I have commanded the ravens to feed you there."
So he went and did according to the word of the LORD; for he went and lived by the Wadi Cherith, that is near the Jordan. And the ravens brought him bread and meat in the morning, and bread and meat in the evening. And he drank from the spring. And it happened after a while that the spring dried up, because there was no rain in the land.
The word of the LORD came to him, saying, "Arise, go to Zarephath, which belongs to Sidon, and stay there. I have commanded a widow there to provide for you." And there were many widows in Israel in the days of Elijah, but he was sent to none of them. He came instead to the land of Sidon. And when he came to the gate of the city, a widow was there gathering wood. And he called to her, and said, "Please bring me a little water in a pitcher, that I may drink."
And as she was going to get it, he called to her, and said, "Please bring me a piece of bread in your hand." But she said, "As the LORD your GOD lives, I do not have anything baked, except a handful of flour in a jar, and a little oil in a jug. I am gathering a couple of sticks, that I may go in and bake it for me and my son, that we may eat it, and die."
And Elijah said to her, "Do not be afraid. Go and do as you have said. But make me of it a little cake first, and bring it out to me, and afterward make some for yourself and for your son. For thus says the LORD, the GOD of Israel, 'The jar of flour will not empty, neither will the jug of oil be empty, until the day that the LORD sends rain on the surface of the land.'" And she went and did according to the saying of Elijah. And she, and he, and her household, ate and yet the jar of flour did not empty,

---

[438] Because Baasha seems to strangely attack Jeroboam's house then go evil, I edited that, and this created a prophecy plothole. I don't know whether Baasha went evil or if this was a mixup from too many kings.
[439] The origin of the Samarians is that they were named after a hill. I omitted his alleged evil, which seems based on prejudice against Samaria. His son, however...

neither did the jug of oil become empty, according to the word of the LORD which he spoke by Elijah. After these things, that the son of the woman fell sick. And his illness was so severe that there was no breath left in him. And she said to Elijah, "What do we have in common anymore? You have come to me to bring my sin to memory and to kill my son." But he said to her, "Give me your son." And he took him out of her lap and carried him up into the room where he stayed, and laid him on his own bed. He cried to the LORD, "LORD my GOD, have you also brought disaster on the widow with who I sojourn, by killing her son?" And he stretched himself upon the child three times, and called out to the LORD, and said, "LORD my GOD, please let this child's soul come into him again." The LORD listened to the voice of Elijah, and the soul of the child came into him again and he revived. And Elijah took the child and brought him down out of the room into the house and gave him to his mother. And Elijah said, "See, your son lives." And the woman said to Elijah, "Now I know that the word of the LORD in your mouth is the truth."

CHAPTER 5

After many days that the word of the LORD came to Elijah, in the third year, saying, "Go, present yourself to Ahab, and I will send rain on Earth." So Elijah went to present himself to Ahab. And the famine was severe in Samaria. And Ahab summoned Obadiah, the steward of the house. (Now Obadiah feared the LORD greatly. And it came about, when Jezebel was killing the prophets of the LORD, that Obadiah took one hundred prophets and hid them, fifty by fifty in a cave,[440] and fed them with bread and water.)

And Ahab said to Obadiah, "Go through the land, to all the springs of water. Perhaps we may find grass and save the horses and mules alive, that we not lose all the animals." So they divided the land between them to explore it, Ahab went one way alone, and Obadiah went another way alone. And as Obadiah was on the way, Elijah met him; and he recognized him and fell on his face and said, "Is it you, Elijah?" He answered him, "It is I. Go, tell your king that Elijah is here."

But Obadiah said, "How have I sinned, that you would deliver me into the hand of Ahab, to kill me? As the LORD your GOD lives, there is no nation or kingdom, where my lord has not sent to seek you. When they said, 'He is not here,' he took an oath of the kingdom and nation, that they did not find you. Now you say, 'Go, tell your lord that Elijah is here.' As soon as I am gone from you, that the *Ruach ha Kodesh* will carry you I do not know where. So when I come and tell Ahab, and he can't find you, he will kill me. But I have feared the LORD from my youth. Wasn't it told what I did when Jezebel killed the prophets of the LORD, how I hid one hundred men of the LORD's prophets, and fed them with bread and water? Surely he will kill me."

But Elijah said, "As the LORD of hosts lives, before who I stand, I will surely present myself to him today." So Obadiah went to meet Ahab, and told him; and Ahab went to meet Elijah. And Ahab said to him, "Is that you, you troubler of Israel?" He answered, "I have not troubled Israel, but your house, in that you have forsaken the commandments of the LORD, and you have followed Baal. Now therefore send, and gather to me all Israel to Mount Carmel, four hundred fifty of the prophets of Baal, and four hundred of the prophets of the Asherah who eat at Jezebel's table."

So Ahab sent to all the children of Israel, and gathered the prophets together at Mount Carmel. And Elijah came near to all the people, and said, "How long will you keep limping between two positions? If the LORD is GOD, follow him, but if Baal, then follow him." But the people did not answer him a word. So he proposed a test to prove the LORD to the people. Elijah said to the people, "I am left the only prophet of the LORD, but the prophets of Baal are four hundred and fifty men, and the prophets of Asherah four hundred. Let them therefore give us two bulls and let them choose one bull for themselves, and cut it in pieces, then lay it on the wood and put no fire under. And I also will prepare the other bull, then lay it on the wood and put no fire under it. And each of us will call on the name of their holy one, and I will also call on the name of the LORD, and the god who answer, he is the real GOD." All the people answered, "It is well said."

And they took the bull which was given them, and they prepared it, and called on the name of Baal from morning even until noon, saying, "Baal, answer us." But there was no voice, nor any who answered. And they limped about the altar they had made. At noon, Elijah mocked them, "Speak

[440] Just as a head up, fifty by fifty is 2500. I think you mean fifty beside fifty.

louder, for he cannot hear you? Maybe Baal is thinking about it, he is busy, he is on a trip, or perhaps he is sleeping and must be awakened." At this, they cried aloud, and cut themselves (as was their custom) with swords and spears until the blood gushed out on them. When midday was past, they prophesied until the offering up of the offering. But there was no voice, no answer, and no response.
Elijah said to all the people, "Come near to me"; and all the people came near to him. He repaired the altar of the LORD that had been torn down. Then Elijah took twelve stones, according to the number of the tribes of the sons of Jacob, to who the word of the LORD came, saying, "Israel will be your name." And with the stones he built an altar in the name of the LORD. And he made a trench around the altar, large enough to contain two rows of seven quarts of seed. And he arranged the wood, and cut the bull in pieces, and laid it on the wood. And he said, "Fill four jars with water, and pour it on the burnt offering, and on the wood." And they did so. And he said, "Do it a second time," and they did it the second time. And he said, "Do it a third time," and they did it the third time. And the water ran around the altar; and he also filled the trench with water.
At the time of the offering up of the offering, Elijah the prophet came near and said, "LORD, the GOD of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Israel. Let it be known this day that you are GOD in Israel, and that I am your servant, and that I have done all these things at your word. Let this people know that you LORD are GOD, and that you have turned their heart back again."
And even as the offering was covered in water, the fire of the LORD fell and consumed the burnt offering, the wood, the stones, the dust, and even licked up the water that was in the trench. And when all the people saw it, they fell facedown and said, "The LORD is GOD. The LORD is GOD."
And Elijah said to them, "Seize the prophets of Baal. Do not let one of them escape." And they seized them. And Elijah brought them down to the Wadi Kishon and they killed them there.
And Elijah said to Ahab, "Get up, eat and drink, for there is the sound of a heavy rain." So Ahab went up to eat and to drink. Elijah went up to the top of Carmel, and he bowed himself down toward the ground, and put his face between his knees. It happened at the seventh time, that he said, "A small cloud, like a man's hand, is rising out of the sea." He said to his servant, "Go up, tell Ahab, 'Get ready and go down, so that the rain doesn't stop you.'" And the sky grew black with clouds and wind, and there was a heavy rain. Ahab rode, and went to Jezreel.
The hand of the LORD was on Elijah, and he tucked his cloak into his belt and ran before Ahab to the entrance of Jezreel.
Then Ahab told Jezebel all that Elijah had done, and how he had killed all the prophets of Baal with the sword. So Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah, saying, "So let the gods do to me, and more also, if I do not make your life as the life of one of them by tomorrow about this time."
And Elijah was afraid, and he got up and fled for his life, and came to Beersheba, which belongs to Judah, and left his servant there. But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a broom tree. And he requested for himself that he might die, and said, "It is enough. Now, O LORD, take away my life, for I am no better than my fathers."
He lay down and slept under a broom tree. And an angel touched him, and said to him, "Arise and eat." He looked up, and there was at his head a cake[441] baked on the coals, and a jar of water. He ate and drank, and lay down again. The LORD came again the second time, and touched him, and said, "Arise and eat, because the journey is too great for you." And he got up and ate and drank, and went in the strength of that food forty days and forty nights to Sinai,[442] the Mount of GOD.
And there he came to a cave and lodged there; and the word of the LORD came to him, and he said to him, "What are you doing here, Elijah?" He said, "I have been very jealous for the LORD, the GOD of hosts. For the children of Israel have forsaken your covenant, thrown down your altars, and slain your prophets with the sword. And now I only am left, and they seek my life to take it away."

---

[441] Elijah's story resonates here. During the COVID "pandemic" when everyone else had irrationally shut themselves away from others, I felt like it was the end of the world. I refused to mask up, so I felt like I was the only one left, and at any moment, people would knock on my door and demand I be vaccinated or die. That day, I received a "cake" of my own. A family friend had brought some doughnuts, with bacon and such, and I had them after skipping lunch and sleeping most of the day away. Remember, no matter how hard things get, human evil is not more powerful than GOD.
[442] Horeb and Sinai are the same mountain. I tried to use Sinai instead of Horeb. Sinai is in Midian, not in the so-called Sinai peninsula. The location on the map has moved over time, so the Jews cannot worship there.

And he said, "Go out tomorrow and stand on the mountain before the LORD."[443] The LORD passed by, and a great and strong wind tore the mountains, and broke in pieces the rocks before the LORD. But the LORD's heart was not in it, and it did not destroy him. After the wind an earthquake, but the LORD's heart was not in it. After the earthquake a fire passed; but the LORD's heart was not in it. And after the fire a still small voice. It was so, when Elijah heard it, that he wrapped his face in his cloak, and went out, and stood in the entrance of the cave. A voice came to him, and said, "What are you doing here, Elijah?" He said, " I have been very jealous for the LORD, the GOD of hosts. For the children of Israel have forsaken your covenant, thrown down your altars, and slain your prophets with the sword. And now I only am left, and they seek my life to take it away."[444]
The LORD said to him, "Go, return on your way and you will come to the way of the wilderness of Damascus. When you arrive, you will anoint Hazael to be king over Aram. You will anoint Jehu to be king over Israel, and you will anoint Elisha to be prophet after you. And he who escapes from the sword of Hazael, Jehu will kill. And he who escapes from the sword of Jehu, Elisha will kill. Yet I have kept a remnant for myself of seven thousand people in Israel. All the knees have not in fact bowed to Baal, and every mouth has not in fact kissed him. Cheer up, Elijah."
So he departed there, and found Elisha plowing, with twelve yoke of oxen before him. And Elijah passed over to him, and cast his cloak on him, asking him to follow him.
He left the oxen and ran after Elijah, and said, "Let me please kiss my father and my mother, and then I will follow you."[445] He said to him, "Go back again, for what have I done to you?" So he kissed goodbye to his family, then returned, took the yoke of oxen, killed them, boiled their flesh with the instruments of the oxen, and gave to the people. And the people ate. Then he arose, and went after Elijah, and served him.

CHAPTER 6

After these things, Naboth the Jezreelite had a vineyard, which was in Jezreel, near the palace of Ahab king of Samaria. And Ahab spoke to Naboth, saying, "Give me your vineyard, that I may have it for a vegetable garden, because it is near to my house. I will give you for it a better vineyard than it. Or, if it seems good to you, I will give you its worth in money."
But Naboth said to Ahab, "May the LORD forbid me, that I should give the inheritance of my fathers to you." Then Ahab came into his house sullen and angry because of the word which Naboth the Jezreelite had spoken to him. He laid himself down on his bed, and turned away his face, and would eat no bread. But Jezebel his wife came to him, and said to him, "Why is your spirit so sad, that you eat no bread?" So he told her what Naboth had said, how he denied him what he felt should be his. Then Jezebel his wife said to him, "Do you now govern the kingdom of Israel? Eat bread and be merry. I will give you the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite."
Then she wrote letters in Ahab's name, and sealed them with his seal, and she sent the letters to the elders and to the nobles who were in his city, who lived with Naboth. She wrote in the letters, saying, «Proclaim a fast, and set Naboth on high among the people. Set two men before him, and let them testify against him, 'You cursed GOD and the king.' Then carry him out, and stone him to death.» And the men of his city did as Jezebel had written in the letters which she had sent to them.
Then they sent word to Jezebel, "Naboth has been stoned and is dead." Then Jezebel said to Ahab, "Arise, take possession of the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite, which he refused to give you for money. For Naboth is not alive, but dead." So he snatched away the land of Naboth.
The word of the LORD came to Elijah the Tishbite, "Arise, go down to meet Ahab King of Israel, who dwells in Samaria. He is in the vineyard of Naboth, where he has gone down to take possession of it. You will speak to him, telling him that in the place where dogs licked the blood of Naboth, dogs will lick your blood."
And Ahab said to Elijah, "Have you found me, my enemy?" And he answered, "I have found you, because you have sold yourself to do that which is evil in the sight of the LORD, to provoke him to

---

[443] Basically, "I can't hear you. Go outside and repeat that."
[444] Many of us when in despair rehearse a narrative. Unlike many of the repetitions in the Bible (which were mainly for memorization during oral history), this one feels authentic. He's repeating himself what he believes, and tells it to GOD, who tells him that it's nonsense.
[445] JESUS would not allow even this. He had people basically drop everything.

anger. The LORD will bring disaster on you, and will utterly sweep you away and will cut off from everyone, slave or free, in Israel. The LORD will make your house like the house of Jeroboam for the provocation with which you have provoked the LORD to anger. You have made Israel to sin."
The LORD also spoke of Jezebel, "The dogs will eat Jezebel in the district of Jezreel. The dogs will eat he who dies in the city, and the birds of the sky will eat he who dies in the field."
But there was none like Ahab, who sold himself to do that which was evil in the sight of the LORD, who Jezebel his wife stirred up. He did very abominably in following idols, according to all that the Amorites did, who the LORD cast out before the children of Israel. When Ahab heard those words, that he tore his clothes, and put sackcloth on his flesh, and fasted, and lay in sackcloth, and went softly.
The word of the LORD came to Elijah the Tishbite, saying, "See how Ahab humbles himself before me? Because he humbles himself before me, I will not bring the disaster in his days; but in his son's days will I bring the disaster on his house." In this, the LORD was merciful to the wicked wretch Ahab, who had done great evil in the sight of all.

CHAPTER 7

Now this is the manner in which Ahab died. There were three years without war between Aram and Israel. In the third year, Jehoshaphat, King of Judah came down to the king of Israel. The king of Israel said to his servants, "You know that Ramoth Gilead is ours, and we are still, and do not take it out of the hand of the king of Aram?"
He said to Jehoshaphat, "Will you go with me to battle to Ramoth Gilead?" Jehoshaphat said to the king of Israel, "I am as you are, my people as your people, my horses as your horses." Jehoshaphat said to the King of Israel, "Please inquire first for the word of the LORD."
Then the king of Israel gathered the prophets together, about four hundred men, and asked them, "will I go against Ramoth Gilead to battle, or will I refrain?" They said, "Go up, for the LORD will deliver it into the hand of the king."
But Jehoshaphat said, "Isn't there here a prophet of the LORD, that we may inquire of him?" The King of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, "There is yet one man by who we may inquire of the LORD, Micaiah the son of Imlah. But I hate him, for he does not prophesy good concerning me."
But Jehoshaphat said, "Do not let the king say so." So the King of Israel called an officer, and said, "Quickly get Micaiah the son of Imlah." Now the King of Israel and Jehoshaphat the King of Judah were sitting each on his throne, arrayed in their robes, in an open place at the entrance of the gate of Samaria; and all the prophets were prophesying before them. Zedekiah the son of Kenaanah made him horns of iron, and said, "Thus says the LORD, 'With these you will push the Arameans, until they are consumed.'" All the prophets prophesied so, saying, "Go up to Ramoth Gilead, and prosper; for the LORD will deliver it into the hand of the king."
The messenger who went to call Micaiah spoke to him, saying, "See now, the prophets declare good to the king with one mouth. Please let your word be like the word of one of them, and speak good."
Micaiah said, "As the LORD lives, what the LORD says to me, that I will speak."
When he had come to the king, the king said to him, "Micaiah, will we go to Ramoth Gilead to battle, or will we forbear?" He answered him, "Go up and prosper; and the LORD will deliver it into the hand of the king." The king said to him, "How many times do I have to adjure you that you speak to me nothing but the truth in the name of the LORD?"
He said, "I saw all Israel scattered on the mountains, as sheep that have no shepherd. These have no master. Let them each return to his house in peace."
The King of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, "Did I not tell you that he would not prophesy good concerning me, but evil?" Micaiah said, "Therefore hear the word of the LORD. I saw the LORD sitting on his throne, and all the army of Heaven standing by him on his right hand and on his left. And the LORD said, 'Who will entice Ahab, that he may go up and fall at Ramoth Gilead?' One said one thing, and another said another. A spirit came out and stood before the LORD, and said, 'I will entice him.' The LORD said to him, 'How?' He said, 'I will go out and will be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets.' He said, 'You will entice him, and will also prevail. Go out and do so.' Now therefore, the LORD has put a lying spirit in the mouth of all these your prophets; and the LORD has pronounced disaster against you."

Then Zedekiah the son of Kenaanah came near, and struck Micaiah on the cheek, and said, "Which way did the *Ruach ha Kodesh* go from me to speak to you?" Micaiah said, "You will see on that day, when you go into an inner room to hide yourself." The King of Israel said, "Take Micaiah, and carry him back to Amon the governor of the city, and to Joash the king's son. Put this fellow in the prison, and feed him with bread of affliction and with water of affliction, until I come in peace." Micaiah said, "If you return at all in peace, the LORD has not spoken by me." He said, "Listen, all you people."
So the King of Israel and Jehoshaphat the King of Judah went up to Ramoth Gilead. The King of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, "I will disguise myself, and go into the battle; but you put on your robes." The King of Israel disguised himself, and went into the battle.
Now the king of Aram had commanded the thirty-two captains of his chariots, saying, Fight neither with small nor great, except only with the king of Israel. It happened, when the captains of the chariots saw Jehoshaphat, that they said, "Surely that is the king of Israel." and they turned aside to fight against him. Jehoshaphat cried out. When the captains of the chariots saw that it was not the king of Israel, that they turned back from pursuing him.
A certain man drew his bow at random, and struck the king of Israel between the joints of the armor. Therefore he said to the driver of his chariot, "Turn your hand, and carry me out of the battle; for I am severely wounded." The battle increased that day. The king was propped up in his chariot facing the Arameans, and died at evening. The blood ran out of the wound into the bottom of the chariot. A cry went throughout the army about the going down of the sun, saying, "Every man to his city, and every man to his country."
So the king died, and was brought to Samaria, and they buried the king in Samaria. They washed the chariot by the pool of Samaria. Aand the dogs licked up his blood where the prostitutes washed themselves, according to the word of the LORD which he spoke. Thus Ahab died. So Ahab slept with his fathers; and Ahaziah his son reigned in his place.
Jehoshaphat the son of Asa began to reign over Judah in the fourth year of Ahab King of Israel. He walked in all the way of the LORD. He did not turn aside from it, doing that which was right in the eyes of the LORD; however, the high places were not taken away; the people still sacrificed and burnt incense in the high places. And Jehoshaphat made peace with the King of Israel, and the he banished the remnant of the male temple prostitute out of the land.
Jehoshaphat made ships of Tarshish to go to Ophir for gold, but they did not go for the ships were broken at Ezion Geber. Then Ahaziah the son of Ahab said to Jehoshaphat, "Let my servants go with your servants in the ships." But Jehoshaphat would not. And after that, Jehoshaphat slept with his fathers, and was buried with his fathers in the City of David his father, and Jehoram his son reigned in his place.
At this time, there was no king in Edom, for a deputy was king. And Ahaziah the son of Ahab began to reign over Israel in Samaria in the seventeenth year of Jehoshaphat King of Judah, and he reigned two years over Israel. He did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD, and walked in the way of his father, and in the way of his mother, and in the way of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, in which he made Israel to sin. He served Baal, and worshiped him, and provoked the LORD to anger according to all that his father had done.

CHAPTER 8

After this, Moab rebelled against Israel after the death of Ahab. Ahaziah fell down through the lattice in his upper room that was in Samaria, and was sick. So he sent messengers, and said to them, "Go, inquire of Baal Zebub,[446] the god of Ekron, whether I will recover of this sickness."
But the LORD said to Elijah the Tishbite, "Arise, go up to meet the messengers of the king of Samaria, and tell them, 'Is it because there is no GOD in Israel, that you go to inquire of Baal Zebub, the god of Ekron? You will not come down from the bed where you have gone up, but will surely die, for the dumb idols cannot heal you.' Thus says the LORD." Elijah departed.
The messengers returned to him, and he said to them, "Why is it that you have returned?" And he spoke the words of Elijah. He said to them, "What kind of man was he who came up to meet you, and told you these words?" They answered him, "He was a hairy man, and wearing a leather belt around

[446] Often corrupted into Beelzebub. But the actual word is Baal Zebub, one of the Baals.

his waist." He said, "It is Elijah the Tishbite."[447]
Then the king sent a captain of fifty with his fifty to him. He went up to him; and he was sitting on the top of the hill. He said to him, "Man of GOD, the king wants you to come down." Elijah answered to the captain of fifty, "If I am a man of GOD, let fire come down from the sky, and consume you and your fifty." Fire came down from the sky, and consumed the captain and his fifty. Another captain was sent, he said these same words, and fire consumed him and his fifty. Again he sent a third captain with his fifty. The third captain of fifty went up the mountain, and saw the charred bones of the other two captains and their fifty. So he came and fell on his knees before Elijah, and begged him, "Man of GOD, please let my life, and the life of these fifty be precious in your sight. Fire has surely come down from the sky, and consumed the two former captains of fifty with their fifties. But now let my life be precious in your sight."
The LORD said to Elijah, "Go down with him. Do not be afraid of him." He arose, and went down with him to the king. He said to him, "Because you have sent messengers to inquire of Baal Zebub, the god of Ekron, is it because there is no GOD in Israel to inquire of his word? Therefore you king, you will not come down from the bed where you have gone up, but will surely die."
So he died according to the word of the LORD which Elijah had spoken. And his brother Jehoram began to reign in his place, because he had no son.

CHAPTER 9

Now the LORD determined to take up Elijah by a whirlwind into Heaven. It happened this way.
Elijah went with Elisha from Gilgal. Then Elijah said to Elisha, "Please wait here, for the LORD has sent me as far as Bethel." Elisha said, "As the LORD lives, and as you live, I will not leave you." So they went down to Bethel. Then the prophets who were at Bethel came out to Elisha, and asked him, "Do you know that the LORD will take away your master from your head today?" He said, "Yes, I know it, shush."
Elijah said to him, "Elisha, please wait here, for the LORD has sent me to Jericho." He said, "As the LORD lives, and as you live, I will not leave you." So they came to Jericho. The prophets who were at Jericho came near to Elisha, and asked him, "Do you know that the LORD will take away your master from your head today?" He answered, "Yes, I know it. Keep silent."
Elijah said to him, "Please wait here, for the LORD has sent me to the Jordan." He said, "As the LORD lives, and as you live, I will not leave you." They both went on. And fifty of the prophets went, and stood opposite them at a distance. And they both stood by the Jordan.
Then Elijah took his cloak, wrapped it together, and struck the waters, and they were divided so that the two of them went over on dry ground.
After they had gone over, that Elijah said to Elisha, "Ask what I will do for you, before I am taken from you." Elisha said, "Please let a double portion of your spirit be on me." He said, "You have asked a hard thing. If you see me when I am taken from you, it will be so for you. Otherwise, it will not be so."
As they continued, a chariot of fire and horses of fire separated them. After that, Elijah went up by a whirlwind into Heaven. Elisha saw him only briefly and cried, "The chariots of Israel and its horsemen!" He saw Elijah no more, and he took hold of his own clothes and tore them in two pieces.
And he picked up the cloak of Elijah that fell from him, and went back, and stood by the bank of the Jordan. And he took the cloak of Elijah that fell from him, and struck the water, and it did not divide. And he said, "Where is the LORD, the GOD of Elijah?" And he struck the water a second time, then they divided and Elisha crossed over. When the sons of the prophets who were at Jericho over against him saw him do this, they said, "The spirit of Elijah rests on Elisha." And they came to meet him, and bowed themselves to the ground before him.
And they said to him, "See now, there are with us fifty strong men. Please let them go and seek your master. Perhaps the *Ruach ha Kodesh* has taken him up and thrown him into the Jordan, or on some mountain, or into some valley." And he said, "Do not send them." For he knew the LORD had taken him already. But they urged him until he was ashamed, so he said, "Send them." They sent therefore fifty men; and they searched for three days, but did not find him.
They came back to him, while he stayed at Jericho. And he said to them, "Did I not tell you not to go?

[447] So Elijah is kinda the prototype for John the Baptist.

Elijah has been taken by the LORD."

CHAPTER 10

Now the men of the city said to Elisha, "The situation of this city is pleasant, but the water is bad, and the land miscarries." He said, "Bring me a new jar, and put salt in it." They brought it to him. He went out to the spring of the waters, and threw salt into it, and said, "The LORD has healed these waters. There will not be from there any more death or miscarrying." So the waters were healed to this day, according to the word of Elisha which he spoke.

He went up from there to Bethel. As he was going up by the way, some youths came out of the city and mocked him, and said to him, "Go up, you baldy. Go up, you baldhead." He looked behind him and saw them, and cursed them in the name of the LORD. Two female bears came out of the woods, and mauled forty-two of those youths. He went from there to Mount Carmel, and from there he returned to Samaria.

Now there cried a certain woman of the wives of the sons of the prophets to Elisha, saying, "My husband is dead. You know that I feared the LORD. Now the creditor has come to take for himself my two children to be slaves."

Elisha said to her, "What will I do for you? Tell me, what do you have in the house?" She said, "Your handmaid has nothing in the house, except a pot of oil." Then he said, "Go, borrow empty containers from of all your neighbors, and do not borrow just a few. Shut the door on you and on your sons, and pour out into all those containers. You will set aside that which is full." So she went from him, did as he said with renting empty containers, and shut the door on her and on her sons. And they brought the containers to her, and she poured out. When the containers were full, that she said to her son, "Bring me another container." Finally, he said to her, "There isn't another container." Then the oil stopped flowing. She came and told the man of GOD. He said, "Go, sell the oil, and pay your debt, and you and your sons live on the rest."

After that, Elisha passed to Shunem, and there was a prominent woman. And she persuaded him to eat bread. So it was, that as often as he passed by, he turned in there to eat bread. She said to her husband, "See now, I perceive that this is a holy man of GOD, that passes by us continually. Please let us make a little room on the wall. Let us set for him there a bed, a table, a chair, and a lamp stand. When he comes to us, he will turn in there."

One day he came there, and he turned into the room and lay there. He said to Gehazi his servant, "Call this Shunammite." When he had called her, she stood before him. He said to her, "You have cared for us with all this care. What is to be done for you? Would you like to be spoken for to the king, or to the captain of the army?" She answered, "I dwell among my own people." He asked, "What then is to be done for her?" Gehazi answered, "Most certainly she has no son, and her husband is old." He said, "Call her." When he had called her, she stood in the door.

Elisha said, "At this season, when the time comes around, you will embrace a son." She said, "No, my lord, you man of GOD, do not lie to your handmaid. For my husband is old." Even so, the woman conceived and bore a son at that season, as Elisha had said to her.

When the child was grown, it happened one day that he went out to his father to the reapers. He said to his father, "My head. My head." He said to his servant, "Carry him to his mother." When he had taken him, and brought him to his mother, he sat on her knees until noon, and then died.

She went up and laid him on the bed of the man of GOD, and shut the door on him, and went out. She called to her husband, and said, "Please send me one of the donkeys, that I may run to the man of GOD and come again." He asked, "Why would you want to go to him today? It is neither new moon nor Sabbath." Even so, she saddled a donkey, and came to the man of GOD to Mount Carmel. It happened, when the man of GOD saw her afar off, he ran to meet her. And he asked her, "Is it well with you? Is it well with your husband?" She answered, "It is well."

When she came to the man of GOD to the hill, she caught hold of his feet. Then she said, "Did I ask a son from my lord? Did I not say, do not deceive me?" The mother of the child said, "As the LORD lives, and as you live, I will not leave you." He arose, and followed her.

When Elisha had come into the house, the child was dead, and lay on his bed. He went in therefore, and shut the door on them both, and prayed to the LORD. He went up, and lay on the child, and put his mouth on his mouth, and his eyes on his eyes, and his hands on his hands. He stretched himself

on him, and he pressed his hands on the child, and the flesh of the child grew warm. Then the child sneezed seven times, and the child opened his eyes. Then he said, "Take up your son." Then she went in, and fell at his feet, and bowed herself to the ground.
Elisha came again to Gilgal. There was a famine in the land, and the prophets were sitting before him. He said to his servant, "Set on the great pot, and boil stew for the prophets." So herbs and gourds, and a wild vine were gathered and placed in the stew. And they poured out for the men to eat. But as they were eating of the stew, they cried out, "Man of GOD, there is death in the pot." Then they could not eat of it. But he said, "Bring some flour." And he threw it into the pot; and he said, 'Pour it out for the people, that they may eat." And there was no harm in the pot. So he set it before them, and they ate, and left some of it, according to the word of the LORD.

CHAPTER 11

Now Naaman, captain of the army of the king of Aram, was a great man with his master, and honorable, because by him the LORD had given victory to Aram. He was also a mighty man of valor, but he was a leper. The Arameans had gone out in bands, and had brought away captive out of the land of Israel a little maiden, and she waited on Naaman's wife.
She said to her mistress, "I wish that my lord were with the prophet who is in Samaria. Then he would heal him of his leprosy." Naaman's wife told Naaman, "The maiden who is from the land of Israel said this."
The king of Aram said, "Go now, and I will send a letter to the King of Israel." He departed, and took with him ten talents of silver, and six thousand pieces of gold, and ten changes of clothing. He brought the letter to the King of Israel, saying, "Now when this letter has come to you, I have sent Naaman to you, that you may heal him of his leprosy." When the King of Israel had read the letter, that he tore his clothes, and said, "Am I GOD, to kill and to make alive, that this man sends to me to heal a man of his leprosy? But please consider and see how he seeks a quarrel against me." When Elisha heard that the King of Israel had torn his clothes, that he sent to the king, saying, "Why have you torn your clothes? He is not asking for you to heal him, only to find someone who can. Let him come now to me, and he will know that there is a prophet in Israel."
So Naaman came with his horses and with his chariots, and stood at the door of the house of Elisha. Then Elisha sent a servant to him, saying, "Go and wash in the Jordan seven times, and your flesh will come again to you, and you will be clean."
But Naaman was angry, and went away, and said, "I thought, he will surely come out to me, and stand, and call on the name of the LORD his GOD, and wave his hand over the place, and heal the leper. But here he only sends his servant.[448] Aren't Abanah and Pharpar, the rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? Couldn't I go wash in them, and be clean?" So he turned and went away in a rage. But his own servants came near, and spoke to him, and said, "If the prophet had asked you to do some great thing, wouldn't you have done it? How much rather then, when he says to you, 'Wash, and be clean?' Why not just do as the prophet asks?"
So he went down and dipped himself seven times in the Jordan, according to the saying of the man of GOD. And as he exited, his flesh was restored like the flesh of a little child, and he was clean. So he returned to the man of GOD, and stood before him, "See now, I know that there is no GOD in all Earth, but in Israel. Now therefore, please take a gift." But Elisha said, "As the LORD lives, before who I stand, I will receive none." He urged him to take it, but he refused.
Naaman said, "If not, then, please let two mules' burden of soil be given to me, for I will from now on offer neither burnt offering nor sacrifice to other gods, but to the LORD. In this thing may the LORD pardon me, so when my master goes into the house of Rimmon to worship there, and he leans on my hand and I bow myself in the house of Rimmon, may the LORD pardon me in this thing." Elisha said to him, "Go in peace." So he departed from him a little way.
But Gehazi the servant of Elisha the man of GOD said, "My master has spared this Naaman the Aramean, in not receiving at his hands that which he brought. As the LORD lives, I will run after him, and take something from him." So Gehazi followed after Naaman. When Naaman saw one running

[448] This is part of why I scrubbed a lot of passages about servants being sent instead of the person themselves. They are viewed as less than the person, which speaks badly of the treatment of servants.

after him, he came down from the chariot to meet him, and said, "Is all well?" He lied, "My master has sent me, saying, 'Even now two young men of the sons of the prophets have come to me from the hill country of Ephraim. Please give them a talent of silver and two changes of clothing.'" So Naaman said, "Be pleased to take two talents." He urged him, and bound two talents of silver in two bags, with two changes of clothing, and laid them on two of his servants; and they carried them before him. When he came to the hill, he took them from their hand, and stored them in the house. Then he let the men go, and they departed.
But he went in, and stood before his master. Elisha said to him, "Where did you come from, Gehazi?" He said, "I went nowhere." Elisha said to him, "Did not my heart go with you, when the man turned from his chariot to meet you? Is it a time to receive money, and to receive garments, and olive groves and vineyards, and sheep and cattle, and male servants and female servants? Therefore the leprosy of Naaman will cling to you and to your descendants forever." He went out from his presence a leper, as white as snow.
Now there were many lepers in Israel in the time of Elisha the prophet, yet not one of them was cleansed. Only Naaman, the Syrian was made pure.

CHAPTER 12

The prophets said to Elisha, "See now, the place where we dwell before you is too small for us. Please let us go to the Jordan, and every man take a beam from there, and let us make us a place there, where we may dwell." He answered, "Go." One said, "Please be pleased to go with your servants." He answered, "I will go."
So he went with them. When they came to the Jordan, they cut down wood. But as one was felling a beam, the axe head fell into the water. Then he cried, and said, "Alas, my master. For it was borrowed." The man of GOD asked, "Where did it fall?" He showed him the place. He cut down a stick, threw it in there, and made the iron float.
He said, "Take it." So he put out his hand and took it. Now the king of Aram was warring against Israel; and he took counsel with his servants, saying, "My camp will be in such and such a place."
The man of GOD sent to the King of Israel, saying, "Beware that you not pass such a place; for the Arameans are coming down there."
The King of Israel sent to the place which the man of GOD told him and warned him of, and he saved himself there, not once nor twice. The heart of the king of Aram was very troubled about this. He called his servants, and said to them, "Won't you show me which of us is for the King of Israel?" One of his servants said, "No, my king; but Elisha, the prophet who is in Israel, tells the King of Israel the words that you speak in your bedroom." He said, "Go and see where he is, that I may send and get him." It was told him, saying, "He is in Dothan." Therefore he sent horses, chariots, and a great army there. They came by night, and surrounded the city. When the servant of the man of GOD had risen early, and gone out, an army with horses and chariots was around the city. His servant said to him, "Alas, my master. What will we do?" He answered, "Do not be afraid; for those who are with us are more than those who are with them."
Then Elisha prayed and said, "LORD, please open his eyes, that he may see." The LORD opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw: and the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire around Elisha.
When they came down to him, Elisha prayed to the LORD, and said, "Please strike this people with blindness." He struck them with blindness according to the word of Elisha. Elisha said to them, "This is not the way, neither is this the city. Follow me, and I will bring you to the man who you seek." He led them to Samaria. It happened, when they had come into Samaria, that Elisha said, "LORD, open the eyes of these men, that they may see." The LORD opened their eyes, and they saw; and they were in the midst of Samaria.
The King of Israel said to Elisha, when he saw them, "Will I strike them?" He answered, "You will not strike them. Would you strike those who you have taken captive with your sword and with your bow? Set bread and water before them, that they may eat and drink, and go to their master." So he prepared great feast for them. When they had eaten and drunk, he sent them away, and they went to their master. The bands of Aram stopped raiding the land of Israel.
After this, Ben Hadad, King of Aram gathered all his army, and went up and besieged Samaria. There was a great famine in Samaria. They besieged it, until a donkey's head was sold for eighty pieces of

silver, and the fourth part of a kab of dove's dung for five pieces of silver. As the King of Israel was passing by on the wall, a woman cried to him, saying, "Help, my lord, O king."
He said, "If the LORD doesn't help you, from where could I help you? From of the threshing floor, or from the winepress?" The king said to her, "What ails you?" She answered, "This woman said to me, 'Give your son, that we may eat him today, and we will eat my son tomorrow.' So we boiled my son, and ate him. And I said to her on the next day, 'Give your son, that we may eat him,' but she has hidden her son. Will you not help me find her son so I may eat him?"[449]
When the king heard the words of the woman, he tore his clothes. Now he was passing by on the wall, and the people looked and saw that he had sackcloth against his skin. Then he said, "GOD do so to me, and more also, if the head of Elisha the son of Shaphat will stay on him this day." But Elisha was sitting in his house, and the elders were sitting with him. Then the king sent a man from before him. But before the messenger came to him, he said to the elders, "Do you see how this son of a murderer has sent to take away my head? When the messenger comes, shut the door, and hold the door shut against him. Isn't the sound of his master's feet behind him?" While he was still talking with them, the messenger came down to him. Then he said, "This disaster is from the LORD. Why should I wait for the LORD any longer?"

CHAPTER 13

Elisha said, "Hear the word of the LORD, 'Tomorrow about this time a measure of fine flour will be sold for a shekel, and two measures of barley for a shekel, in the gate of Samaria.'"[450] Then the captain on whose hand the king leaned answered the man of GOD, and said, "If the LORD made windows in Heaven, could this thing be?" He said, "You will see it with your eyes, but will not eat of it."
Now there were four leprous men at the entrance of the gate. And they said to one another, "Why do we sit here until we die? If we say, 'We will enter into the city,' then the famine is in the city, and we will die there. If we sit still here, we also die. Now therefore come, and let us surrender to the army of the Arameans. If they save us alive, we will live. And if they kill us, we will only die."
They rose up in the twilight, to go to the camp of the Arameans. When they had come to the outermost part of the camp of the Arameans, there was no man there. For the LORD had made the army of the Arameans to hear a noise of chariots, and a noise of horses, even the noise of a great army: and they said one to another, "The King of Israel has hired against us the kings of the Hethites, and the kings of the Egyptians, to come on us."
Therefore, they arose and fled in the twilight, and left their tents, and their horses, and their donkeys, and fled for their life. When these lepers came to the outermost part of the camp, they went into one tent, and ate and drink, and carried there silver, and gold, and clothing, and went and hid it. Then they came back, and entered into another tent, and carried there also, and went and hid it.
Then they said one to another, "We aren't doing what is right. This day is a day of good news, and we keep silent. If we wait until the morning light, punishment will overtake us. Now therefore come, let us go and tell the king's household." So they came and called to the gatekeepers of the city; and they told them, saying, "We came to the camp of the Arameans, and, there was no man there, neither voice of man, but the horses tied, and the donkeys tied, and the tents as they were."
The gatekeepers called out, and it was reported to the king's household within. The king arose in the night, and said to his servants, "I will now show you what the Arameans have done to us. They know that we are hungry. Therefore are they gone out of the camp to hide themselves in the field, saying, 'When they come out of the city, we will take them alive, and get into the city.'"
And one of his servants answered, "Please let some take five of the horses that remain, which are left in the city. They are like the whole multitude of Israel who have already perished. Let us send and see." They took therefore two chariots with horses, and the king sent after the army of the Arameans, saying, "Go and see."
They went after them to the Jordan, and all the way was full of garments and vessels, which the Arameans had cast away in their haste. The messengers returned, and told the king. The people went out, and plundered the camp of the Arameans. So because of plunder and not because of famine, a

[449] Yeaaaah, this passage is messed up.
[450] Probably indicating a famine.

measure of fine flour was sold for a shekel, and two measures of barley for a shekel, according to the word of the LORD.
The king appointed the captain on whose hand he leaned to be in charge of the gate, and the people trampled on him in the gate, and he died as the man of GOD had said.

CHAPTER 14

Now Elisha had spoken to the woman, whose son he had restored to life, saying, "Arise, and go, you and your household, and stay for a while wherever you can; for the LORD has called for a famine. It will also come on the land seven years." So the woman arose, and did according to the word of the man of GOD. She went with her household, and lived in the land of the Philistines seven years. At the seven years' end, the woman returned out of the land of the Philistines. Then she went forth to cry to the king for her house and for her land.
Now the king was talking with Gehazi the servant of the man of GOD, saying, "Please tell me all the great things that Elisha has done." As he was telling the king how he had restored to life him who was dead, that the woman, whose son he had restored to life, cried to the king for her house and for her land. Gehazi said, "My lord, O king, this is the woman, and this is her son, who Elisha restored to life."
When the king asked the woman, she told him. So the king appointed to her a certain officer, saying, "Restore all that was hers, and all the fruits of the field since the day that she left the land, even until now."
Elisha came to Damascus; and Ben Hadad, King of Aram was sick. It was told him, saying, "The man of GOD has come here." The king said to Hazael, "Take a present in your hand, and meet the man of GOD, and ask of the LORD by him, 'Will I recover from this sickness?'"
So Hazael went to meet him, and took a present with him, even of every good thing of Damascus, forty camels' burden, and came and stood before him, and said, "Your son Ben Hadad king of Aram has sent me to you, saying, 'Will I recover from this sickness?'"
Elisha said to him, "Go, say to him, 'You will surely recover;' however the LORD has shown me that he will surely die." For Elisha knew that this was a good servant, and that he would be killed for his message. He settled his gaze steadfastly on him, then the man of GOD wept for shame.
Hazael asked, "Why do you weep, my lord?" He answered, "Because I know the evil that you will do to the children of Israel. You will set their strongholds on fire, and you will kill their young men with the sword, and will dash in pieces their little ones, and rip up their women with child."
Hazael said, "But what am I, that I should do this great thing?" Elisha answered, "The LORD has shown me that you will be king over Aram." Then he departed from Elisha, and came to his master, who said to him, "What did Elisha say to you?" He answered, "He told me that you would surely recover." It happened on the next day, that he took a thick cloth, dipped it in water, and spread it on his face, such was his fever. So after that, he died. Then Hazael reigned in his place.
In the fifth year of Joram, Jehoram, the son of Jehoshaphat, King of Judah began to reign. He was thirty-two years old when he began to reign. He reigned eight years in Jerusalem. He walked in the way of the kings of Israel (that is, wickedness), for he had the daughter of Ahab as wife. However the LORD would not destroy Judah, for David his servant's sake, as he promised him to give to him a lamp for his children always.
In his days, Edom revolted from under the hand of Judah, and made a king over themselves. Then Joram passed over to Zair, then all his chariots with him rose up by night and struck the Edomites who surrounded him, and the people fled to their tents. So Edom revolted from under the hand of Judah. Then Libnah revolted at the same time. Then Joram slept with his fathers, and was buried with his fathers in the City of David; and Ahaziah his son reigned in his place.
After that, Ahaziah began to reign. He reigned one year in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Athaliah the daughter of Omri King of Israel. He was evil in the sight of the LORD, and the LORD decreased his reign. He went with Joram the son of Ahab to war against Hazael king of Aram at Ramoth Gilead, and the Arameans wounded Joram. King Joram returned to be healed in Jezreel of the wounds which the Arameans had given him at Ramah, when he fought against Hazael king of Aram. Ahaziah went down to see Joram in Jezreel, because he was sick.

CHAPTER 15

Elisha the prophet called one of the sons of the prophets, and said to him, "Put your belt on your

waist, take this vial of oil in your hand, and go to Ramoth Gilead. When you come there, find Jehu the son of Jehoshaphat the son of Nimshi, and make him arise up from among his brothers, and carry him to an inner room. Then take the vial of oil, and pour it on his head, and say, 'Thus says the LORD, I have anointed you king over Israel.' Then open the door, flee, and do not wait."
So the young man, even the young man the prophet, went to Ramoth Gilead. When he came, the captains of the army were sitting. Then he said, "I have a message for you, captain." Jehu said, "To which of us all?" He said, "To you, O captain." He arose, and went into the house. Then he poured the oil on his head, and said to him, "Thus says the LORD, the GOD of Israel, I have anointed you king over Israel. " He also said, "You will strike the house of Ahab your master, that I may avenge the blood of the prophets, and the blood of all the servants of the LORD, at the hand of Jezebel. For the whole house of Ahab will perish. I will cut off from Ahab everyone who urinates against a wall, both him who is shut up and him who is left at large in Israel. I will make the house of Ahab like the house of Jeroboam the son of Nebat. The dogs will eat Jezebel on the plot of ground of Jezreel, and there will be none to bury her." He opened the door, and fled.
Then Jehu came forth to the servants of his lord: and one said to him, "Is all well? Why did this mad fellow come to you?" He said to them, "You know the man and what his talk was." They said, "That is a lie. Tell us now." He said, "He said to me, 'Thus says the LORD, I have anointed you king over Israel.'" At these words, they hurried, took their garments, put them under him on the top of the stairs, and blew the trumpet, saying, "Jehu is king."
So Jehu the son of Jehoshaphat the son of Nimshi conspired against Joram. Jehu said, "If this is your thinking, then let no one escape and go out of the city, to go to tell it in Jezreel." So Jehu rode in a chariot, and went to Jezreel, for Joram lay there. Ahaziah King of Judah had come down to see Joram. Now the watchman was standing on the tower in Jezreel, and he saw the company of Jehu as he came, and called out. Joram said, "Take a horseman to meet them, and ask, 'Is it peace?'" So there went one on horseback to meet him, and said, " Is it peace?" But Jehu said, "What do you have to do with peace? Fall in behind me." The watchman said, "The messenger came to them, but he isn't coming back." Then he sent out a second on horseback, who came to them, and said, "Is it peace?" Jehu answered, "What do you have to do with peace? Fall in behind me."
The watchman said, "He isn't coming back either. That looks like Jehu, for he drives furiously."
Joram said, "Get ready." They got his chariot ready. Joram and Ahaziah went out, each in his chariot, and they went out to meet Jehu, and found him in the portion of Naboth the Jezreelite.
When Joram saw Jehu, that he said, "Is it peace, Jehu?" He answered, "What peace, so long as the prostitution of your mother Jezebel and her witchcraft abound?" Joram turned his hands, and fled to Ahaziah, but no sooner did he say, "There is treason, Ahaziah," that Jehu drew his bow with his full strength, and shot Joram between his arms. And the arrow went out at his heart, and he sunk down in his chariot.
Then Jehu said to Bidkar his captain, "Pick him up, and throw him in the plot of the field of Naboth the Jezreelite, for I remember how when you and I rode together behind Ahab his father, the LORD pronounced this judgement on him, 'Surely I have seen yesterday the blood of Naboth, and the blood of his sons, and I will repay you in this plot of ground.' Now therefore take and cast him onto the plot of ground, according to the word of the LORD."
But when Ahaziah the King of Judah saw this, he fled by the way of the garden house. Jehu followed after him, and said, "Shoot him also." And they shot him in the chariot at the ascent of Gur, which is by Ibleam. He fled to Megiddo, and died there. His servants carried him in a chariot to Jerusalem, and buried him in his tomb with his fathers in the City of David.
When Jehu had come to Jezreel, Jezebel heard of it. And she painted her eyes, and attired her head, and looked out at the window.[451] As Jehu entered in at the gate, she said, "Do you come in peace, Zimri, you murderer of your master?" He lifted up his face to the window, and said, "Who is on my side?" Two or three eunuchs looked out at him. So he said, "Throw her down." And they did, and some of her blood was spattered on the wall, and on the horses. Then he trampled her underfoot.
When he had come in, he ate and drank, saying, "See now to this cursed woman, and bury her, for she

[451] Jezebel is now older. I feel a sorta pathetic attempt at seduction here.

still is a king's daughter." They went to bury her; but they found no more of her than the skull, and the feet, and the palms of her hands.[452] Therefore, they came back, and told him. He said, "This is the word of the LORD, which he spoke by his servant Elijah the Tishbite. He said that the dogs will eat the flesh of Jezebel on the plot of Jezreel, and the body of Jezebel will be as dung on the face of the field in the portion of Jezreel, so that they will not say, 'This is Jezebel.'"

CHAPTER 16

Now Elisha was fallen sick and was to die, and Joash, King of Israel came down to him, and wept over him, "The chariots of Israel and its horsemen."[453] So Elisha said to him, "Take bow and arrows," and he took to him bow and arrows. He said to the King of Israel, "Put your hand on the bow," and he put his hand on it. Elisha laid his hands on the king's hands. He said, "Open the window eastward," and he opened it. Then Elisha said, "Shoot," and he shot.

Elisha said, "The LORD's arrow of victory, even the arrow of victory over Aram; for you will strike the Arameans in Aphek, until you have consumed them."

He said, "Take the arrows," and he took them. He said to the King of Israel, "Strike the ground as many as you wish," and he struck three times and stopped. Elisha said, "You should have struck five or six times. Then you would have struck Aram until you had consumed it, whereas now you will strike Aram just three times." Elisha died, and they buried him, and he slept with his people.

CHAPTER 17

Now this is the way the kingdom of Israel fell. Around the time of Elisha, Jehu was the last who did any good in the eyes of the LORD, and it was at best mixed. After him, the worship moved to Samaria, and for the most part, Israel returned to idols. Of course, some of this may be exaggeration, because this there is bad blood with Samaria. But in any case, it is widely believed that there was not one after him who did any right. And these were the kings and queens in power in Israel after Jehu: Jehoahaz, Joash, Jeroboam II, Zachariah, Tashemelum,[454] Menahem, Pekahiah, Pekah, and Ausi.[455] And after Ausi, the people of Israel were taken into exile by the Assyrians. And the people of Judah and the people of Israel both claim that because the other were not taken with them, that they are not the Chosen People. But the people of Israel were like the child that Solomon wanted to cut in half. They were claimed by the adversaries of the one state of Israel, for the LORD preferred to give them away rather than to have their hearts lost.

CHAPTER 18

Now this is the way the kingdom of Judah fell. Now these were the kings of Judah when Elisha was alive: Jehoshaphat, Jehoram, Ahaziah, Athaliah, and Joash (no relation to the one in Israel, for when this one died, the other was just being born), the last with Elisha living into his early reign. And after Elisha died, Joash did right in his youth but gradually turned to wickedness. After him, Amaziah reigned, and he also did right by the LORD in his youth, but became quite wicked. After him, Uzziah came into power, and he greatly pleased the LORD for his reign, and he ruled in strength and power. But his strength became a weakness, when he tried to usurp the power of the priesthood. The temple of the LORD shook, and sunlight shined from a crack in the temple on his face, and he was struck with leprosy. And Uzziah's reign was significant as the time of Amos and Isaiah, with the latter coming into prophecy at his death.

After Uzziah, Jotham was in power, and did right in the eyes of the LORD, but after him, only Hezekiah and Josiah did any right in the LORD's eyes, for they destroyed the altars of the people, and Hezekiah even smashed the bronze snake that Moses had made.[456] Instead, a long parade of kings and queens came into power only to burn idols, oppress the widow and the orphan, or make unjust deals with other lands against Israel. And these were the names of those who did evil in the LORD's eyes: Ahaz,

---

[452] Ewww.

[453] Elisha said these same words at Elijah's being swept up by the LORD.

[454] This name got messed up thanks to Find/Replace. Originally it was Shallum, but became Willum. The name apparently means "Retribution, " so I changed it entirely based on its meaning. Also, there were two Shallums, so yeah…

[455] Originally, Hoshea but there is a prophet named Hosea, so that's a hard pass.

[456] Even the cross, is not intended to replace JESUS. Nor this book. When you venerate objects and not GOD, this is an idol that you are worshiping. And this is what happened to the bronze staff that Moses made when they were bitten by serpents. It was a tool that saved them through obeying GOD's command, not an object of worship itself. And it had become one.

Manasseh, Amon, Jehoahaz (who was also known as Sellemos), Jehoiakim (also called Eliakim), Jeconiah, and finally Mattaniah.
And during this time, the people themselves went astray, for the king is not only a leader, but a role model to his people. And it this day, there were many prophets warning people to turn away from wickedness, and return to the LORD. But the religious establishment regarded them as false teachers, and killed the propets by stoning in Jerusalem. So it was that an expression arose that, "it cannot be that a prophet perish outside of Jerusalem." For Jerusalem was regarded as holy, but actually it was a place of animal sacrifice. And so also, the prophets were sacrificed like mere animals.
After this, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came up, and Jehoiakim became his servant three years: then he turned and rebelled against him. The LORD sent against him bands of the Chaldeans, Arameans, the Moabites, and the people of Ammon. And he sent them against Judah to destroy it, according to the word of the LORD, which he spoke by his servants the prophets.
The king of Egypt did not come again out of his land any more, for the king of Babylon had taken all that pertained to the king of Egypt. At that time the servants of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came up to Jerusalem, and the city was besieged. Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came to the city, while his servants were besieging it, and he carried out there all the treasures of the house of the LORD, and the treasures of the king's house, and cut in pieces all the vessels of gold, which Solomon King of Israel had made in the LORD's temple, as the LORD had said.
He carried away all Jerusalem, and all the officials, and all the mighty men of valor, and none remained, except the poorest sort of the people of the land. He carried away Jehoiachin to Babylon, the king's mother, the king's wives, his officers, and all the chief men of the land into captivity from Jerusalem to Babylon. Seven thousand, including the craftsmen and the smiths, all of them strong and apt for war, the king of Babylon brought captive to Babylon. For through the anger of the LORD, he had cast them out from his presence.
The king of Babylon made Mattaniah (Jehoiachin's father's brother, who was king is his place) change his name to Zedekiah.[457] Zedekiah was twenty-one years old when he began to reign, and he did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD. And Zedekiah rebelled against the king of Babylon, so the city was besieged to the eleventh year of king Zedekiah. On the ninth day of the fourth month the famine was severe in the city, so that there was no bread for the people of the land. Then a breach was made in the city, and all the men of war fled by night by the way of the gate between the two walls, and they went by the way of the Arabah. But the army of the Chaldeans pursued after the king, and overtook him in the plains of Jericho; and all his army was scattered from him. Then they took the king, and carried him up to the king of Babylon to Riblah; and they gave judgement on him. They killed the sons of Zedekiah before his eyes, and put out the eyes of Zedekiah, and bound him in fetters, and carried him to Babylon. They burnt the house of the LORD, and the king's house, and all the great houses of Jerusalem were burnt with fire. And the army of the Chaldeans broke down the walls around Jerusalem. The Chaldeans broke up the pillars of bronze that were in the house of the LORD and the bases and the bronze sea that were in the house of the LORD, and carried the bronze pieces to Babylon. They took away the pots, the shovels, the snuffers, the spoons, and all the vessels of bronze with which they ministered. The captain of the guard took away all there was in gold, and that which was of silver. Nebuzaradan, captain of the guard carried away captive the residue of the people who were left in the city, and those who fell away. But the captain of the guard left some of the poorest of the land to work the vineyards and fields. And Jeremiah, for the LORD had left him to the city, having spoken to Zedekiah to urge him to surrender to Babylon, so the king of Babylon spared him exile.
It happened in the seven and thirtieth year of the captivity of Jehoiachin King of Judah, in the twelfth month, on the seven and twentieth day of the month, that Awil-Marduk king of Babylon, in the year that he began to reign, lifted up the head of Jehoiachin King of Judah out of prison.
And he spoke kindly to him, and set his throne above the throne of the kings who were with him in Babylon, and changed his prison garments. Jehoiachin ate bread before him continually all the days of his life: and for his allowance, there was a continual allowance given him of the king, every day a portion, all the days of his life.

[457] In other words, he was used as a puppet king.

And after him, the line of Jehoiachin (also known as Jeconiah) was said to be cursed by the LORD,[458] and no suitable kings could be found for over five hundred years. And the land of Israel was so defiled up that even foxes would not enter the land. It had become a byword. Even so, the LORD promised, "I will for this afflict the offspring of David, but not forever. "

PATIENCE OF JOB

CHAPTER 1

There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job. He had a wife who gave him seven sons and three daughters, seven thousand sheep, three thousand camels, five hundred yokes of oxen, five hundred female donkeys, and a very great household. He was admired throughout the land for his good fortune and prosperity that GOD blessed him with.

His sons went and held a feast in the house of each one on his day; and they sent and called for their three sisters to eat and to drink. When their feasting had finished, each time Job rose up early, and offered burnt offerings, saying, "It may be that my sons have sinned, and cursed GOD in their hearts." For Job was not merely prosperous, but also devout.

Now on the day when the angels came to present themselves before the LORD, Satan was among them. The LORD said to Satan, "Have you considered Job? For there is none like him in Earth, a blameless and an upright man, one who loves GOD, and turns away from evil." Then Satan accused Job,[459] "Does Job fear GOD for nothing? You have sheltered him and blessed him with all good things. What if you were to take what he has? I suppose he would curse you to your face." The LORD said to Satan, "Whatever he has I give you authority to take.[460] Only, you must keep his health." So Satan left the presence of the LORD.[461]

One day, while his children were eating and drinking in their eldest brother's house, a messenger came and said, "People from the land of Sheba came and took your oxen and donkeys, and your servants were killed defending them. I alone have escaped to tell you." While he was still speaking, and said, "A star has fallen from the sky, and has burned up the sheep and the young men tending them, and I alone have escaped to tell you." While he was still speaking, still another came, and said, "The Kasdim made three bands, and have taken the camels, and killed the young men watching after them. I alone have escaped to tell you." Still came also another, and said, "Your sons and your daughters were eating and drinking wine in their eldest brother's house, and there came a mighty wind from the forests, and struck the house, and it fell on the young men, and they are dead. I alone have escaped to tell you."

So Job rose from his seat, tore his robe, and shaved his head, and fell down with his face to the ground. He said, "Naked I came out of my mother's womb, and naked will I return there. The LORD gave, and the LORD has taken away. Blessed be the name of the LORD."

Job did not sin, nor charge GOD with wrongdoing. Likewise, GOD did not charge Jonah with wrongdoing.

CHAPTER 2

The angels again presented themselves before the LORD, and Satan was again among them. The LORD said to Satan, "Have you considered Job? For there is none like him in Earth, one who fears GOD, and turns away from evil. And he still holds firmly to his integrity, although you asked that all he had be ruined."

But Satan answered the LORD, and said, "Yes, but a man will give all he has to spare his life. But allow him to lose his health, and he will curse you to your face." The LORD said to Satan, "Very well, I give you authority over his health, but his life will be spared." So Satan departed the LORD, and Job was

---

[458] In Jeremiah, originally, but in the process of trying to organize this, the passage was lost.

[459] Satan's name basically means "accuser" and this is his job.

[460] GOD gives Satan authority to take Job's prosperity. Otherwise, he would have no power to do any such thing.

[461] This is a weird story, but the key takeaways are that GOD, not Satan, is in control of evil (as well as good). And that Satan works for GOD to accuse humans. Because humans know good and evil, they are accused by Satan. His "friends" become instruments of this agenda, telling him that he must have done something to deserve this. As for Satan, either he is in rebellion or still working as Accuser. I don't really care either way.

struck with painful boils everywhere from his feet to the top of his head. And Job took for himself a pot shard to scrape himself with while he sat among the ashes. At the ruins of his house, a fox prowled, but found nothing of value.
Then his wife said to him, "Do you still hold firmly to your integrity? Curse GOD, and die." But he said to her, "You speak as one of the foolish women would speak. Do we love and fear GOD only for the good he does, and not also for adversity?" In all this Job did not sin with his lips.

CHAPTER 3

Now Job's three friends heard of all that had happened to him, they each came from his own place: Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite, and they each came to comfort him. But when they saw him, they could barely recognize him from the state he was in. And they each tore their robe, and threw dust over their heads. So they sat down with him on the ground seven days and seven nights, and none spoke a word to him, for they saw that his pain was very great.
Job opened his mouth, and cursed his day. Job said, "Let the day perish when I came to be, the night which said, 'A man is born.' Let that day be an evil day, a day of darkness. May GOD above not care about it enough that the light shine on it. As for that night, let thick darkness seize on it. Count it not among the days of the year. Let everyone curse the day, that a mighty leviathan[462] might rouse up to swallow it whole. Let the stars of its twilight be dark."
He continued in this fashion, "Why did I not die from the womb? Why did I not give up the spirit when my mother bore me? I should have slept, then I would have been at rest, as infants who never saw light. At least there the wicked cease from troubling, there the weary are at rest, and there the prisoners are at ease together. They do not hear the voice of the taskmaster. The small and the great are there. The servant is free from his master."
And still he continued, "Why is light given to him who is in misery, life to the bitter in soul, why is life given to those who long for death and who are glad when they finally can find the grave? And why is good given to a man whose way is hid, who GOD has sheltered? I am not at ease, neither do I rest, but trouble comes."

CHAPTER 4

Then Eliphaz the Temanite answered, "If someone wants to talk with you, will you be upset? But who can stop himself from speaking? You have taught many, you have strengthened the weak. Your words have supported him who was falling, You have made firm the feeble. But when misfortune comes to you, you faint. It touches you, and you are troubled. Isn't your piety your confidence? Isn't the integrity of your ways your hope?" He continued, "Remember, now, whoever perished, being innocent? Or where were the upright cut off? According to what I have seen, those who plow iniquity, and sow trouble, reap the same. Will mortal man be more righteous than GOD? Will a man be more pure than his Maker? Do you accuse the angels? How much more, those who dwell in houses of clay, whose foundation is in the dust, who are crushed before the moth. The living return to dust after barely a moment."

CHAPTER 5

He told Job, "But as for me, I would seek GOD. I would commit my cause to GOD, who does great things that can't be fathomed, marvelous things without number, who gives rain on Earth, and sends waters on the fields, so that he sets up on high those who are low, those who mourn are exalted to safety. He frustrates the devices of the crafty, so that their hands can't perform their enterprise. He traps the wise in their own craftiness, and the counsel of the cunning are brought to a quick end. But he saves the needy and poor from their distress. If misfortune comes to you, surely GOD corrects the wrong you do. You should count it as a blessing. Don't despise the discipline of GOD. For the LORD wounds and binds up. He injures, but his hands also make whole. You should trust in him, for he is the source of what happens to you."

CHAPTER 6

---

[462] A mythical sea creature, often a sea dragon. The Leviathan is often an embodiment of chaos, which threatened to eat the damned when their lives are over. Ultimately, it is annihilated. This is possibly an idea with inspiration from Israel's contact with the myths of Egypt, where a creature ate the dead whose soul was heavier than a feather. Or with Babylon, as it resembles Tiamat. The leviathan was compared in some texts (such as a book of that name) to the might of the state of government.

Then Job answered, "Oh that my anguish were weighed, and all my calamity laid in the balances. For the arrows of Shaddai are within me, and the terrors of GOD set themselves against me. The wild donkey is content as long as he has grass, but as for me, even what I have is taken. If I might have my request, that GOD would grant the thing that I long for, even that it would please GOD to crush me. For what purpose is my strength, that I should wait? And what is my end, that I should be patient?" He continued, "I am in despair. But even if I forsake the fear of the LORD, I ought to expect kindness from my friend. Yet instead, my brothers have dealt deceitfully. You came here, and were confounded. You see a terror, and are afraid. Did I say, 'Redeem me from the hand of the oppressors'? No, I asked nothing. Teach me, and I will be silent. Tell me what I have done wrong. You talk of uprightness, but how can you judge me when neither of us know what I have done wrong? I am desperate to fix whatever I can."[463]

CHAPTER 7

Job continued, "When I lie down, I say, 'When will I arise, and the night be gone?' I toss and turn until the dawning of the day. My flesh is covered with worms and dust. My skin closes up, and breaks out again. My days are spent without hope. My life is a breath. My eye will see no more that is good. Whoever sees me will see me no more. Your eyes will be on me, but I will not be. He will return no more to his house, neither will his place know him any more. This is why I will not keep silent. I will tell you the anguish of my spirit. I will tell you the bitterness of my spirit. Am I a leviathan, a sea monster, that you put a guard over me? When I say, 'Maybe my bed will comfort me. My couch will ease my complaint;' then you scare me with dreams, and terrify me through visions, my spirit seizes. I loathe my life. I do not want to live forever. Leave me alone, for my days are but a breath. What is man, that you should magnify him, that you should set your mind on him, that you should visit him every morning, and test him every moment? How long will you not look away from me, nor leave me alone? If I have sinned, what do I do? Why have you singled me out, so that I am a burden to myself? Why do you not pardon my disobedience, and take away my iniquity? I lie down in the dust. You will seek me, but I will not be there."

CHAPTER 8

Then Bildad the Shuhite answered, "How long are you going to speak these things? Does GOD pervert justice? Or does Shaddai pervert righteousness? If you want to seek GOD diligently, make your petition to Shaddai. If you were pure and upright, surely now he would awaken for you, and make the habitation of your righteousness prosperous. Though your beginning was small, yet your latter end would greatly increase. Study about the learning of their previous generations. Will they not teach you, tell you, and utter words out of their heart? Can the rushes grow without water? While it is yet in its greenness, not cut down, it withers before any other reed. So too are all who forget GOD. The hope of the godless man will perish. If he is destroyed from his place, then all will deny him, saying, 'I have not seen you.' This is the joy of his way, if he is gone, others will come after him. He is replaceable, and none will miss him. But GOD will not cast away a blameless man, neither will he uphold the evildoers. He will still fill your mouth with laughter, your lips with shouting. Those who hate you will be clothed with shame. The tent of the wicked will be no more."

CHAPTER 9

Then Job answered, "I know that is so, but how can man be just with GOD? If he is pleased to contend with him, how can he know his will? Who has hardened himself against him, and prospered? He removes the mountains, and they do not know it, when he overturns them in his anger. He shakes Earth out of its place. Its pillars tremble. He commands the sun, and it doesn't rise, and seals up the stars. He alone stretches out Heaven, and treads on the waves of the sea. He does great things past finding out; yes, marvelous things without number."

He said, "Who can hinder him? Who will ask him, 'What are you doing?' How much less will I answer him, and choose my words to argue with him? Though I were righteous, yet I wouldn't answer him. I

---

[463] As an editor, I made a previous version of the Bible, searching for a version that was not copyrighted. I was confounded when I was told that one version couldn't be published for reasons that didn't make sense. The translator of the version had withdrawn any claims of copyright and given permission. I asked over and again what I had done wrong and they only told me vague answers. Yes, I understand the feeling of wanting to fix things and getting no answer.

would petition to my advocate.[464] If I had called, and he had answered me, yet I wouldn't believe that he listened to my voice. For he bruises me with a storm, and multiplies my wounds without cause. He will not allow me to catch my breath. If it is a matter of strength, I know he is mighty. And if of justice, who will summon him? Though I am righteous, my own mouth will condemn me. Though I am blameless, it will prove me perverse. Even now, I despise my life."
Job sighed, "It is all the same. Therefore I say he destroys the blameless and the wicked. If the scourge kills suddenly, he will mock at the trial of the innocent. The Earth is given into the hand of the wicked. He covers the faces of its judges. If not he, then who is it? I am afraid of all my sorrows, I know that you will not hold me innocent. I will be condemned. Why then do I labor in vain? Even if I wash myself white with snow, and clean my hands with soap, you will plunge me in the ditch. My own clothes will abhor me. For he is not a man, as I am, that I should answer him, that we should come together in judgement. Let him take his rod away. Let his terror not make me fear, then I would speak."

CHAPTER 10

Job continued, "My spirit is weary of my life. I will give free course to my complaint. I will tell GOD, 'Do not condemn me. Show me why you contend with me. Is it good that you should despise the work of your hands, and smile on my enemies? Although you know that I am not wicked, there is no one who can deliver out of your hand. Your hands have made me, yet now you destroy me. Remember, I beg you, that you have molded me as clay. You have clothed me with skin, you have woven me together with muscle and bone. Will you bring me into dust again? You have granted me life and loving kindness. If I sin, then you mark me. You will not acquit me from my iniquity. If I am wicked, woe to me. If I am righteous, I still will not lift up my head, as I am filled with disgrace. Why, then, have you delivered me out of the womb? I should have been carried from the womb directly to the grave. Aren't my days few enough? Then leave me alone, that I may find a little comfort, before I go where I will not return from, to the land of death.'"

CHAPTER 11

Then Zophar, the Naamathite, answered, "Why should your boastings make men hold their peace? When you mock, will no man make you ashamed? You say to us, 'My doctrine is pure. I am clean in your eyes.' But oh that GOD would speak, and open his lips against you, that he would show you your foolishness. For true wisdom has two sides. Can you fathom the mystery of GOD? Or can you probe the limits of the LORD? They are high as Heaven and deeper than Sheol. What can you do? What can you know? If he passes by or convenes a court, then who can oppose him? For he knows false men. He sees iniquity also, even though he doesn't consider it. If iniquity is in your hand, put it far away. Do not let unrighteousness dwell in your tents. Surely then you will lift up your face without spot. Yes, you will be steadfast and will not fear, for you will forget your misery. You will remember it as waters that are passed away. You will be secure, because there is hope. Yes, you will search, and will take your rest in safety. Also you will lie down, and none will make you afraid. Yes, many will court your favor. But the eyes of the wicked will fail. They will have no way to flee. Their hope will be the giving up of the spirit."

CHAPTER 12

Then Job answered, "No doubt, but you are the people, and wisdom will die with you. I have understanding the same as you. I am not inferior to you. Who doesn't know such things as these? I am like one who is a joke to his neighbor. I, who called on GOD, and he would always answer. The blameless man is a joke. It is a matter of time before his foot slips. Meanwhile, the tents of robbers prosper. Those who provoke GOD are secure, those who carry the gods[465] in their hands. Who doesn't know that in all these, the hand of the LORD has done this, in whose hand is the life of every living thing, and the breath of all humankind? With him is wisdom and might. He has counsel and understanding. He breaks down, and it can't be built again. He imprisons a man, and there can be no release. He holds the waters, and the land dries up. He sends them out again, and they overturn Earth. He uncovers deep things out of darkness, and brings out to light the shadow of death. He

[464] The advocate is JESUS. But he didn't know that.
[465] These were called *teraphim*, manmade idols that could be carried around.

increases the nations, and he destroys them. He enlarges the nations, and he leads them captive. He takes away understanding from the chiefs of the people of Earth, and causes them to wander in a wilderness where there is no way.[466] They grope in the dark without his light. He makes them stagger like a drunken man."
He continued, "My eye has seen all this. My ear has heard and understood it. What you know, I know also. I am not inferior to you. I desire to reason with GOD. But you are forgers of lies. You are all physicians of no value. Your words do not heal. Your memorable sayings are proverbs of ashes, and your defenses are defenses of clay. Oh, that you would be completely silent. Listen to the pleadings of my lips. Why should I put my life in my hand? He will kill me. I have no hope. Nevertheless, I will maintain my ways before him. This also will be my salvation, that a godless man will not come before him. Hear diligently my speech. Let my declaration be in your ears."
Job thus justified himself, "I have set my cause in order. I know that I am righteous. How many are my iniquities and sins? Make me know my disobedience and my sin. Why hide you your face, and hold me for your enemy? Man, who is born of a woman, is of few days, and full of trouble. He comes forth like a flower, and is cut down. He also flees like a shadow, and doesn't continue. But man dies, and is laid low. Yes, man gives up the spirit, and where is he? As the waters fail from the sea, and the river wastes and dries up, so man lies down and doesn't rise. Until Heaven are no more, they will not awake, nor be roused out of their sleep.[467] If a man dies, will he live again? All the days of my warfare would I wait, until my release should come. You would call, and I would answer you. But now you number my steps. Do you not watch over my sin? The waters wear the stones. The torrents of it wash away the dust of Earth. So you destroy the hope of man. You forever prevail against him, and he departs. You change his face, and send him away. His flesh on him has pain, and his soul within him mourns."

CHAPTER 13

Then Eliphaz the Temanite answered, "Should a wise man answer with vain knowledge, and fill himself with the east wind? Should he reason with unprofitable talk, or with speeches with which he can do no good? Yes, you do away with fear, and hinder devotion before GOD. For your iniquity teaches your mouth, and you choose the language of the crafty. Your own mouth condemns you, and not I. Yes, your own lips testify against you. Are the consolations of GOD too small for you, even the word that is gentle toward you? Why does your heart carry you away? Why do your eyes flash, that you turn your spirit against GOD, and let such words go out of your mouth? He puts no trust in his holy ones. Yes, Heaven are not clean in his sight, how much less one who is abominable and corrupt, a man who drinks iniquity like water. The wicked man writhes in pain all his days, even the number of years that are laid up for the oppressor. A sound of terrors is in his ears. In prosperity the destroyer will come on him. He doesn't believe that he will return out of darkness. He is waited for by the sword. He wanders abroad for bread, saying, 'Where is it?' He knows that the day of darkness is ready at his hand. Distress and anguish make him afraid. They prevail against him, as a king ready to the battle. Because he has stretched out his hand against GOD, and behaves himself proudly against Shaddai, he runs at him with a stiff neck, with the thick shields of his bucklers. He has lived in desolate cities, in houses which no one inhabited, which were ready to become heaps. He will not be rich, neither will his substance continue, neither will their possessions be extended on Earth. Let him not trust in emptiness, deceiving himself; for emptiness will be his reward. For the company of the godless will be barren, and fire will consume their tents. They conceive mischief, and bring forth iniquity. Their heart prepares deceit."

CHAPTER 14

Then Job answered, "I have heard many such things. You are all miserable comforters. Will vain words have an end? Or what provokes you that you answer? I also could speak as you do. If you were in my place, I could join words together against you, and shake my head at you, but I would strengthen you with my mouth. The solace of my lips would relieve you. Though I speak, my grief is

[466] In Daniel, this actually happens. King Nebuchanezzar is stripped of his mind and wanders around eating grass like a beast.
[467] The resurrection of Christ sorta poked a hole in this notion, when he not only rose but also many dead raised from their graves in Matthew.

not subsided. Though I forbear, what am I eased? You have shriveled me up. This is a witness against me. My leanness rises up against me. It testifies to my face. He has torn me in his wrath, and persecuted me. He has gnashed on me with his teeth. My adversary sharpens his eyes on me. They have gaped on me with their mouth. They have struck me on the cheek reproachfully. They gather themselves together against me. GOD delivers me to the ungodly, and casts me into the hands of the wicked. I was at ease, and he broke me apart. Although there is no violence in my hands, and my prayer is pure, "Earth, do not cover my blood. Let my cry have no place to rest. Even now, my witness is in Heaven. He who vouches for me is on high. My friends scoff at me. My eyes pour out tears to GOD, that he would maintain the right of a man with GOD, of a son of man with his neighbor. For when a few years have come, I will go the way from where I will not return. The grave is ready for me. Now give a pledge, be collateral for me with yourself. Who is there who will strike hands with me? He who denounces his friends for a prey, even the eyes of his children will fail. But he has made me a byword of the people. They spit in my face. But as for you all, come on now again; I will not find a wise man among you. My days are past, my plans are broken off, as are the thoughts of my heart."

CHAPTER 15

Then Bildad the Shuhite answered, "How long will you hunt for words? Consider, and afterwards we will speak. Why are we counted as animals, which have become unclean in your sight? You who tear yourself in your anger, will Earth be forsaken for you? Or will the rock be removed out of its place? Yes, the light of the wicked will be put out, The spark of his fire will not shine. The light will be dark in his tent. His lamp above him will be put out. The steps of his strength will be shortened. His own counsel will cast him down. For he is cast into a net by his own feet, and he wanders into its mesh. A snare will take him by the heel. A trap will catch him. His memory will perish from Earth. He will have no name in the street. He will be driven from light into darkness, and chased out of the world. He will have neither son nor grandson among his people, nor any remaining where he sojourned. Those who come after will be astonished at his day, as those who went before were frightened. Surely such are the dwellings of the unrighteous. This is the place of him who doesn't know GOD."

CHAPTER 16

Then Job answered, "How long will you torment me, and crush me with words? You have reproached me many times. You aren't ashamed that you attack me. If it is true that I have erred, my error remains with myself. If indeed you will magnify yourselves against me, and plead my disgrace against me; know now that GOD has subverted me, and has surrounded me with his net. I cry out but there is no justice. He has walled up my way so that I can't pass, and has set darkness in my paths. He has stripped me of my glory, and taken the crown from my head. He has broken me down on every side, and I am gone. My hope he has plucked up like a tree. He has also kindled his wrath against me. He counts me among his adversaries. His troops come on together, build a siege ramp against me, and camp around my tent. He has put my brothers far from me. My acquaintances are wholly estranged from me. My relatives have gone away. My familiar friends have forgotten me. Those who dwell in my house, and my maids, count me for a stranger. I am a foreigner in their sight. I call to my servant, and he gives me no answer. My breath is offensive to my wife. Even young children despise me. If I arise, they speak against me. All my familiar friends abhor me. They who I loved have turned against me. My bones stick to my skin and to my flesh. I have escaped by the skin of my teeth."

He begged, "Have pity on me, have pity on me, you my friends; for the hand of GOD has touched me. Why do you persecute me as GOD, and are not satisfied with my flesh? But as for me, I know that my Redeemer lives. In the end, he will stand upon Earth. After my skin is destroyed, then in my flesh will I see GOD, who I, even I, will see on my side. My eyes will see, and not as a stranger. My heart is consumed within me."

CHAPTER 17

Then Zophar the Naamathite answered, "Therefore do my thoughts give answer to me, even by reason of my haste that is in me, for I have heard the reproof which puts me to shame. The spirit of my understanding answers me. Do you not know this from old time, since humankind was placed on Earth, that the triumphing of the wicked is short, the joy of the godless but for a moment? Though wickedness is sweet in his mouth, though he hide it under his tongue, though he spare it, and will not

let it go, but keep it still within his mouth; yet his food in his bowels is turned. It is cobra venom within him. He has swallowed down riches, and he will vomit them up again. GOD will cast them out of his belly. That for which he labored he will restore, and will not swallow it down. According to the substance that he has gotten, he will not rejoice. For he has oppressed and forsaken the poor. He has violently taken away a house, and he will not build it up. Because he knew no quietness within him, he will not save anything of that in which he delights. There was nothing left that he did not devour, therefore his prosperity will not endure. Heaven will reveal his iniquity. The Earth will rise up against him. The increase of his house will depart. They will rush away in the day of his wrath. This is the portion of a wicked man from GOD, the heritage appointed to him by GOD."

CHAPTER 18

Then Job answered, "Listen diligently to my speech. Let this be your consolation. Allow me, and I also will speak; after I have spoken, mock on. As for me, is my complaint to man? Why shouldn't I be impatient? Look at me, and be astonished. Lay your hand on your mouth. When I remember, I am troubled. Horror takes hold of my flesh."

He asked, "Why do the wicked live, become old, yes, and grow mighty in power?[468] Their child is established with them in their sight, their offspring before their eyes. Their houses are safe from fear, neither is the rod of GOD upon them. Their bulls breed without fail. Their cows calve, and do not miscarry. They send forth their little ones like a flock. Their children dance. They tell GOD, 'Depart from us, for we do not want to know about your ways. What is Shaddai, that we should serve him? What profit should we have, if we pray to him?' Their prosperity is not in their hand. The counsel of the wicked is far from me. So how can you comfort me with nonsense, seeing that in your answers there remains only falsehood?"

CHAPTER 19

Then Eliphaz the Temanite answered, "Can a man be profitable to GOD? Surely he who is wise is profitable to himself. Is it any pleasure to Shaddai, that you are righteous? Or does it benefit you, that you make your ways perfect? Is it for your piety that he reproves you, that he enters with you into judgement?[469] Isn't your wickedness great? Neither is there any end to your iniquities. For you have taken pledges from your brother for nothing, and stripped the naked of their clothing. You haven't given water to the weary to drink, and you have withheld bread from the hungry. But as for the mighty man, he had Earth. The honorable man, he lived in it. Please receive instruction from his mouth, and lay up his words in your heart. If you return to Shaddai, you will be built up, if you put away unrighteousness far from your tents. For then you will delight yourself in Shaddai, and will lift up your face to GOD. You will make your prayer to him, and he will hear you. You will pay your vows. And you will also decree a thing, and it will be established for you, and light will shine on your ways."

CHAPTER 20

Then Job answered,[470] "How have you helped him who is without power? How have you saved the arm that has no strength? How have you counseled him who has no wisdom, and plentifully declared sound knowledge? As GOD lives, who has taken away my right, Shaddai, who has made my spirit bitter. (For the length of my life is still in me, and the *Ruach ha Kodesh* is in my nostrils); surely my lips will not speak unrighteousness, neither will my tongue utter deceit. Far be it from me that I should justify you. I hold fast to my righteousness, and will not let it go. Because I delivered the poor who cried, and the fatherless also, who had none to help him, the blessing of him who was ready to perish came on me, and I caused the widow's heart to sing for joy. I put on righteousness, and it clothed me. My justice was as a robe and a diadem. I was eyes to the blind, and feet to the lame. I was a father to the needy. The cause of him who I did not know, I searched out. I broke the jaws of the unrighteous, and plucked the prey out of his teeth. I lived as a king in the army, as one who comforts the mourners."

---

[468] Or, "Why do good things happen to bad people?"

[469] He's saying that he is self-righteous, and maybe his actions are done for his own vanity rather than for GOD

[470] There was an entire passage from Bildad and a response from Job but neither of them answered the question about whether Job helped the poor, nor said anything new, and just had more insufferable poetic language. Eliphaz accuses him of not helping the poor, so I cut several passages until we finally get to that accusation.

CHAPTER 21

Job continued, "But now those who are younger than I have me in derision, whose fathers I would have disdained to put with my sheep dogs. Of what use is the strength of their hands to me, men in who ripe age has perished? They are gaunt from lack and famine. They gnaw the dry ground, in the gloom of waste and desolation. They are children of fools, the children of base men. They were flogged out of the land. Now I have become their song. I am a byword to them. They abhor me, they keep their distance from me, and do not hesitate to spit in my face. They cast up against me their ways of destruction. They mar my path, they set forward my calamity, without anyone's help. As through a wide breach they come, in the midst of the ruin they roll themselves in. My heart is troubled, and doesn't rest. Days of affliction have come on me. My skin grows black and peels from me. My bones are burned with heat. Therefore my harp has turned to mourning, and my pipe into the voice of those who weep."

CHAPTER 22

And Job concluded his speech against them, "I made a covenant with my eyes, how then should I look lustfully at a young woman? Is it not calamity for the unrighteous, and disaster for evildoers? If I have walked with falsehood, and my foot has hurried to deceit
(let me be weighed in an even balance, that GOD may know my integrity); if my step has turned out of the way, if my heart walked after my eyes, if any defilement has stuck to my hands, then let me sow, and let another eat. Let the produce of my field be rooted out. If my heart has been enticed to another woman, then let my wife grind for another, and let others sleep with her. If I have despised the cause of my male servant or of my female servant, what then will I do when GOD rises up? When he visits, what will I answer him? Did not he who made me in the womb make him? Did not the same one fashion us in the womb? If I have withheld the poor from their desire, or have caused the eyes of the widow to fail, or have eaten my morsel alone; if I have seen any perish for want of clothing, or that the needy had no covering; if his heart hasn't blessed me, if he hasn't been warmed with my sheep's fleece; if I have lifted up my hand against the fatherless, because I saw my help in the gate, then let my shoulder fall from the shoulder blade, and my arm be broken from the bone. For calamity from GOD is a terror to me. Because his majesty, I can do nothing. If I have made gold my hope, and have said to the fine gold, 'You are my confidence;' if I have rejoiced because my wealth was great, and because my hand had gotten much; this also would be an iniquity to be punished by the judges; for I should have denied the GOD who is above. If I have rejoiced at the destruction of him who hated me, or lifted up myself when evil found him; if the men of my tent have not said, 'Who can find one who has not been filled with his meat?'; if like Adam I have covered my transgressions, by hiding my iniquity in my heart, because I feared the great multitude, and the contempt of families terrified me, so that I kept silence, and did not go out of the door; if my land cries out against me, and its furrows weep together; if I have eaten its fruits without money, or have caused its owners to lose their life, let briars grow instead of wheat, and stinkweed instead of barley." Thus ended Job's words.

CHAPTER 23

So these three men ceased to answer Job, because he was righteous in his own eyes. Then the wrath of Elihu the son of Barakel, the Buzite, of the family of Ram, was kindled against Job. His wrath was kindled because he justified himself rather than GOD. His wrath was kindled also against his three friends, because they had found no answer, despite having condemned Job. Now Elihu had waited to speak to Job, because they were elder than he. Finally he answered, "I am young, and you are very old so I held back, and did not dare show you my opinion. I said, 'Days should speak, and multitude of years should teach wisdom.' But there is a spirit in man, and the breath of Shaddai gives them understanding. It is not the great who are wise, nor the aged who understand justice. Finally I say, 'Listen to me; I also will show my opinion.' I waited for your words, and I listened for your reasoning, while you searched out what to say. Yes, I gave you my full attention, but there was no one who convinced Job, or who answered his words, among you. They are amazed. They answer no more. They do not have a word to say. Will I wait, because they do not speak, because they stand still, and answer no more? For I am full of words. The spirit within me constrains me. Please do not let me respect any man's person, neither will I give flattering titles to any man. For I do not know how to give flattering titles; or else my Maker would soon take me away."

He continued, "However, Job, please hear my speech, and listen to all my words. The *Ruach ha Kodesh* has made me, and the breath of Shaddai gives me life. I am toward GOD even as you are. I am also formed out of the clay. I have heard the voice of your words, saying, 'I am clean, without disobedience. I am innocent, neither is there iniquity in me. He finds occasions against me. He counts me for his enemy.' I will answer you. In this you are not just, for GOD is greater than man. Why do you strive against him, because he doesn't give account of any of his matters? For GOD speaks once, yes twice, though man pays no attention. In a dream, in a vision of the night, when deep sleep falls on men, in slumbering on the bed; then he opens the ears of men, and seals their instruction. He is chastened also with pain on his bed, with continual strife in his bones; so that his life abhors bread, and his soul choicest food. His flesh is so consumed away, that it can't be seen. His bones that were not seen stick out. If there is beside him an angel, an interpreter, one among a thousand, to show to man what is right for him; then he is gracious to him, and says, 'Deliver him from going down to the pit, I have found a ransom.' He prays to GOD, and he is favorable to him, so that he sees his face with joy. He restores to man his righteousness. He sings before men, and says, 'I have sinned, and perverted that which was right, and it did not profit me. He has redeemed me from the pit. My life will see the light.' GOD works all these things, twice, yes three times, with a man, to bring back his soul from the pit, that he may be enlightened with the light of the living. Mark well, Job, and listen to me. Hold your peace, and I will speak. If you have anything to say, answer me. Speak, for I desire to justify you. If not, listen to me. Hold your peace, and I will teach you wisdom."

Moreover Elihu answered, "Hear my words, you sages. Give ear to me, you who have knowledge. For the ear tries words, as the palate tastes food. Let us choose for us that which is right. Let us know among ourselves what is good. For Job has said, 'I am righteous, GOD has taken away my right: Notwithstanding my right I am considered a liar. My wound is incurable, though I am without disobedience.' What man is like Job, who drinks scorn like water, Who goes in company with evildoers, and walks with wicked men? For he has said, 'It profits a man nothing that he should delight himself with GOD.' "Therefore listen to me, you men of understanding: far be it from GOD, that he should do wickedness, from Shaddai, that he should commit iniquity. For the work of a man he will render to him, and cause every man to find according to his ways. Yes surely, GOD will not do wickedly, neither will Shaddai pervert justice. Who put him in charge of Earth? or who has appointed him over the whole world? If he set his heart on himself, If he gathered to himself his spirit and his breath, all flesh would perish together, and man would turn again to dust. If now you have understanding, hear this. Listen to the voice of my words. will even one who hates justice govern? Will you condemn him who is righteous and mighty? For he doesn't need to consider a man further, that he should go before GOD in judgement. He breaks in pieces mighty men in ways past finding out, and sets others in their place. Therefore he takes knowledge of their works. He overturns them in the night, so that they are destroyed. When he hides his face, who then can see him? For has any said to GOD, 'I am guilty, but I will not offend any more. Teach me that which I do not see. If I have done iniquity, I will do it no more'? Men of understanding will tell me, yes, every wise man who hears me: 'Job speaks without knowledge. His words are without wisdom.' I wish that Job were tried to the end, because of his answering like wicked men. For he adds rebellion to his sin. He claps his hands among us, and multiplies his words against GOD."

Elihu continued, "Do you think this to be your right, or do you say, 'My righteousness is more than GOD'S,' That you ask, 'What advantage will it be to you? What profit will I have, more than if I had sinned?' I will answer you, and your companions with you. Look to Heaven, and see. See the skies, which are higher than you. If you have sinned, what effect do you have against him? If your transgressions are multiplied, what do you do to him? If you are righteous, what do you give him? Or what does he receive from your hand? Your wickedness may hurt a man as you are, and your righteousness may profit a son of man. "By reason of the multitude of oppressions they cry out. They cry for help by reason of the arm of the mighty. But none says, 'Where is GOD my Maker, who gives songs in the night, who teaches us more than the animals of the land, and makes us wiser than the birds of the sky?' There they cry, but none gives answer, because of the pride of evil men. Surely GOD will not hear an empty cry, neither will Shaddai regard it. How much less when you say you do not see him. The cause is before him, and you wait for him. But now, because he has not visited in his

anger, neither does he greatly regard arrogance. Therefore Job opens his mouth with empty talk, and he multiplies words without knowledge."
Elihu's continuing intensified, "Bear with me a little, and I will show you; for I still have something to say on GOD'S behalf. GOD is mighty, and doesn't despise anyone. He is mighty in strength of understanding. He doesn't preserve the life of the wicked, but gives to the afflicted their right. He doesn't withdraw his eyes from the righteous, but with kings on the throne, he sets them forever, and they are exalted. But those who are godless in heart lay up anger. They do not cry for help when he binds them. They die in youth. Their life perishes among the unclean. Yes, he would have allured you out of distress, into a broad place, where there is no restriction. But you are full of the judgement of the wicked. Do not let riches entice you to wrath, neither let the great size of a bribe turn you aside. Would your wealth sustain you in distress, or all the might of your strength? GOD is exalted in his power. Who is a teacher like him? Or who can say, 'You have committed unrighteousness?' Remember that you magnify his work, whereof men have sung. GOD is great, and we do not know him. The number of his years is unsearchable. For he draws up the drops of water, which distill in rain from his vapor, Which the skies pour down and which drop on humankind abundantly. Yes, can any understand the spreading of the clouds, and the thunderings of his pavilion? He spreads his light around him. He covers the bottom of the sea. For by these he judges the people. He gives food in abundance. Hear, oh, hear the noise of his voice, the sound that goes out of his mouth. He sends it forth under the whole sky, and his lightning to the farthest parts of Earth. He thunders with the voice of his majesty. GOD thunders marvelously with his voice. He does great things, which we can't comprehend. For he says to the snow, 'Fall on Earth;' likewise to the shower of rain, and to the showers of his mighty rain. Then the animals take cover, and remain in their dens. Out of its chamber comes the storm, and cold out of the north. By the breath of GOD, ice is given, and the breadth of the waters is frozen. Yes, he loads the thick cloud with moisture. He spreads abroad the cloud of his lightning. It is turned around by his guidance, that they may do whatever he commands them on the surface of the habitable world. Whether it is for correction, or for his land, or for loving kindness, that he causes it to come. Listen to this, Job. Stand still, and consider the wondrous works of GOD. Do you know how GOD controls them? Do you know the miracles of the clouds, the wondrous works of him who is perfect in knowledge? You whose clothing is warm, when Earth is still by reason of the south wind? Can you, with him, spread out the sky, which is strong as a cast metal mirror? Teach us what we will tell him, for we can't make our case by reason of darkness. Now men do not see the light which is bright in the skies, but the wind passes, and clears them. With GOD is awesome majesty. We can't reach Shaddai. He is exalted in power. In justice and great righteousness, he will not oppress. Therefore men revere him."

CHAPTER 24

And behold, Earth and Heaven were in turmoil, and a great whirlwind seized up the land and sky.[471] Then the LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind,[472] "Who is this who darkens counsel by words without knowledge? Brace yourself like a man, for I will question you, then you answer me. Where were you when I laid the foundations of Earth? Declare, if you have understanding. Who determined its measures, if you know? Or who stretched the line on it? Whereupon were its foundations fastened? Or who laid its cornerstone, when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of GOD shouted for joy? Or who shut up the sea with doors, when it broke forth from the womb, when I made clouds its garment, and wrapped it in thick darkness, marked out for it my bound, set bars and doors, and said, 'Here you may come, but no further. Here your proud waves will be stayed?'"
And GOD continued, "Have you commanded the morning in your days, and caused the dawn to know its place; that it might take hold of the farthest parts of Earth, and shake the darkness out of it? From the darkness, its light is withheld. Have you entered into the springs of the sea? Or have you walked in the recesses of the deep? Have the gates of death been revealed to you? Or have you seen the gates of the shadow of death? Have you comprehended Earth in its entirety? Surely you know, for you were born then, and the number of your days is great. Have you seen the glory of snow, or of the hail,

[471] I added this part because there was an inexplicable whirlwind. And because it's how this would translate as a dramatic event, such as in a movie.
[472] GOD when he appears, begins by echoing Elihu, then gradually sides with Job as he confesses his sins.

which I have reserved against the time of trouble, against the day of battle and war? By what way is the lightning distributed, or the east wind scattered on Earth? Who has cut a channel for the flood water, or the path for the thunderstorm; to cause it to rain on a land where no man is; on the wilderness, in which there is no man; to satisfy the waste and desolate ground, to cause the tender grass to spring forth? Does the rain have a father? And who fathers the drops of dew? Out of whose womb came the ice? Do you know the laws of Heaven? Can you establish its dominion over Earth? Can you lift up your voice to the clouds, that abundance of waters may cover you? Can you send forth lightnings, that they may go? Do they report to you, 'Here we are?' Who has put wisdom in the inward parts? Or who has given understanding to the mind? Who can number the clouds by wisdom? Or who can pour out the bottles of the sky, when the dust runs into a mass, and the clods of soil stick together? Can you hunt the prey for the lioness, or satisfy the appetite of the young lions, when they crouch in their dens, and lie in wait in the thicket? Who provides for the raven his prey, when his young ones cry to GOD, and wander for lack of food? Do you know the time when the mountain goats give birth? Do you watch when the doe bears fawns? Can you number the months that they fulfill? Or do you know the time when they give birth? Their young ones become strong. They grow up in the open field. Is it by your wisdom that the hawk soars, and stretches her wings toward the south? Is it at your command that the eagle mounts up, and makes his nest on high? On the cliff he dwells, and makes his home, on the point of the cliff, and the stronghold. From there he spies out the prey. His eyes see it afar off. His young ones also suck up blood. Where the slain are, there he is."
Moreover the LORD answered Job, "Will he who argues contend with Shaddai? He who argues with GOD, let him answer it."
Then Job answered the LORD, "I am of small account. What will I answer you? I lay my hand on my mouth. I have spoken once, and I will not answer; twice, but I will proceed no further."
Then the LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind, "Now brace yourself like a man. I will question you, and you will answer me. Will you even annul my judgement? Will you condemn me, that you may be justified? Look at everyone who is proud, and humble him. Crush the wicked in their place. Then I will also admit to you that your own right hand can save you. See now, behemoth, which I made as well as you. He eats grass as an ox, his strength is in his thighs. His force is in the muscles of his belly. He moves his tail like a cedar. The sinews of his thighs are knit together. His bones are like tubes of bronze. His limbs are like bars of iron. He is the chief of the ways of GOD. He who made him gives him his sword. Surely the mountains produce food for him, where all the animals of the field play. He lies under the lotus trees, in the covert of the reed, and the marsh. The lotuses cover him with their shade. The willows of the brook surround him. If a river overflows, he doesn't tremble. He is confident, though the Jordan swells even to his mouth. Will any take him when he is on the watch, or pierce through his nose with a snare?[473] Can you draw out the leviathan with a fishhook,[474] or press down his tongue with a cord? Who has confronted me, that I should repay? Everything under Heaven is mine."

CHAPTER 25

Then Job answered the LORD, "I know that you can do all things, and that no purpose of yours can be restrained. You asked, 'Who is this who hides counsel without knowledge?' therefore I have uttered that which I did not understand, things too wonderful for me, which I did not know. You said, 'Listen, now, and I will speak; I will question you, and you will answer me.' I had heard of you by the hearing of the ear, but now my eye sees you. Therefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes."[475]
It was so, that after the LORD had spoken these words to Job, the LORD said to Eliphaz the Temanite, "My wrath is kindled against you, and against your two friends; for you have not spoken of me the thing that is right, as Job has.[476] Now therefore, take to yourselves seven bulls and seven rams, and go

---

[473] GOD appears to be saying to Job, "You want my job?" We as humans like to declare ourselves guiltless and others guilty, but all have sinned.
[474] I wrote a book called *Oracle of Tao*. Ambrosia (who is an incarnation of GOD and) who is known for using a fishing pole as a weapon, does encounter a leviathan.
[475] Of the Old Testament writings, this is most relevant to understanding JESUS. We are declared to be accused, but when we admit our sins, GOD shows us that ultimately we have no accusers. GOD defends Job against his "friends" and restores his fortune.
[476] Condemnation and judgement is not the way of GOD, despite the words of so-called religious types.

to Job, and offer up for yourselves a burnt offering; and Job will pray for you, for I will accept him, that I not deal with you according to your folly. For you have not spoken of me the thing that is right, as Job has."
So Eliphaz the Temanite and Bildad the Shuhite and Zophar the Naamathite went, and did what the LORD commanded them, and the LORD accepted Job. The LORD turned the captivity of Job, when he prayed for his friends. The LORD gave Job twice as much as he had before. Then came there to him all his brothers, and all his sisters, and all those who had been of his acquaintance before, and ate bread with him in his house. They comforted him, and consoled him concerning all the evil that the LORD had permitted on him.
So the LORD blessed the latter end of Job more than his beginning. He had fourteen thousand sheep, six thousand camels, one thousand yoke of oxen, and a thousand female donkeys.
He had also seven sons and three daughters. He called the name of the first, Jemimah; and the name of the second, Keziah; and the name of the third, Keren Happuch. In all the land were no women found so beautiful as the daughters of Job. Their father gave them an inheritance among their brothers. And so, Job lived one hundred forty years, and saw his daughters to four generations. So Job died, being old and full of days.

ECCLESIASTES

Solomon wished the LORD for wisdom to rule his country, and indeed he was rewarded for his request by wealth, power, and women as well as wisdom. But wisdom is no protection against foolish behavior. Having wisdom, he spent his life searching for meaning, and wound up pursuing a number of unworthy tasks. For instance, he devoted himself to his work, but he found it hollow. He finds no merit in work for its own sake, but that it is meaningless and vain, for nobody spends their life wishing they could spend more time in the office, and a life is gone like the blink of an eye while time is wasted trying to get ahead or provide for family. Or he pursued pleasures, but found that desires can actually create boredom and loss of purpose, and eventually depression. The thinking of many of the Hebrew people was that wealth and long life was a reward for righteousness, but he had wealth to spare, and he despaired that the results of his efforts would be in vain because while he was wise with his money, it could be left to someone who recklessly and foolishly wastes wealth. As for longevity, what good is it to live a long life if it is filled with pain or suffering? For the teeth are gone, the bones creak and break, the vision or hearing goes, the beauty fades, and even wisdom is addled by the years. He tried pursuit in science, studying of philosophy, entertainment, alcohol, great projects of building, owning property, and living in luxury. Without GOD as its focus, none of it amounted to anything, for no purpose can bring meaning if GOD is not the goal. But with GOD, life has purpose, with GOD, we find that the simpler things in life are deeply satisfying.

JONAH

CHAPTER 1

Now the word of the LORD came to Jonah the son of Amittai, saying, "Wake up and go to Nineveh,[477] that great city, and tell it of its sin, for I intend it to be destroyed."
But Jonah fled to Tarshish,[478] running from the presence of the LORD. Walking in earnest to Joppa, he boarded a ship going to Tarshish. He paid its fare, and tried to get away from the presence of the LORD.[479] But the LORD sent out a great wind on the sea, and the seas were tossed by mighty waves. The ship looked as though it was likely to break up. The mariners were afraid, and cried every man to his god. They jettisoned their food and supplies, and all that was in the ship to lighten it. Jonah had gone down into the cabin of the ship, and he was fast asleep.
So the shipmaster came to him, and asked, "Why are you sleeping? Don't you know that we are perishing? Call on your GOD. Maybe your GOD will notice us and we won't perish." And they threw

[477] Ninevah is in Mesopotamia or modern day Iraq, what is now the city of Kouyunjik
[478] Tarshish is in Spain, pretty much the exact opposite direction.
[479] Like in the *Runaway Bunny*, Jonah should have known this is impossible. This story has parallels to the story where Sun Wukong tries to fly out of the Buddha's hand, gets to the pillars at the end of the universe, paints his name on them (and pees on them) only to find the writing and the smell of pee on Buddha's hands. You can't run away from GOD.

lots to determine who was responsible for the ship, and Jonah was the scapegoat. So they asked him, "Are you indeed the cause of this evil that is upon us? Who are you? Where do you come from? And why have you come?"

He said to them, "My name is Jonah, and I am a Hebrew, a prophet who fears the LORD the GOD of Heaven and Earth, who has made the sea and dry land. I have been sent to prophesy to Ninevah, but I disobeyed and headed to Tarshish. I am the cause of your evil." Then were the men exceedingly afraid, and said to him, "What is this that you have done?" For the men knew that he was fleeing from the presence of the LORD, and they knew he spoke the truth. Then said they to him, "What should we do to you, that the sea may calm down?" Outside the ship, the sea grew more and more stormy, with waves that came over the boat. He said to them, "Jettison me into the sea to make your boat lighter. Then the sea will be calm for you, because it is me that GOD wants." But the men were horrified at the idea of throwing GOD's prophet overboard, and so they rowed hard to return to the land. But the sea grew more and more stormy against them. Finally they cried to the LORD, and said, "We beg you, LORD, we beg you, let us not perish for this man's life, and do not lay on us innocent blood." And with that, they took up Jonah, and threw him into the sea. The sea quelled its raging.

And the men feared the LORD, and they offered a sacrifice to the LORD. While Jonah lay underwater, a great fish swallowed up Jonah to save him from drowning. And Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights.[480]

CHAPTER 2

Then Jonah prayed to the LORD, his GOD, from inside the fish's belly. He said, "I called because of my affliction to the LORD. He answered me. Out of the belly of Sheol I cried. You heard my voice. For you threw me into the depths, in the heart of the seas. The flood was all around me. All your breakers and waves passed over me. I said, 'I have been banished from your sight; yet I will look again toward your holy temple.' The waters surrounded me, threatening my life. The deep was around me. The end is upon my head. I went down to the bottoms of the mountains. The Earth barred me in forever: yet have you brought up my life from the pit, LORD my GOD. When my spirit fainted within me, I remembered the LORD. My prayer came in to you, into your holy temple. Those who regard worthless things forsake their faithfulness. But I will sacrifice to you with the voice of thanksgiving. I will pay that which I have vowed. Salvation belongs to the LORD."

The LORD spoke to the fish, and it vomited out Jonah on the dry land. Jonah washed himself off in the water, headed to dry land and slept after his ordeal.

CHAPTER 3

The word of the LORD came to Jonah the second time, saying, "Wake up and go to Nineveh, that great city, and tell it of its sin, for I intend it to be destroyed." This time Jonah arose, and went to Nineveh, according to the word of the LORD.

Now Nineveh was an exceedingly great city, three days' journey across. Jonah began to enter into the city a day's journey, and he cried out, and said, "The end is near! In forty days, Nineveh will be overthrown!" And the people of Nineveh believed GOD, and they proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth. The news reached the king of Nineveh, and he arose from his throne, and took off his royal robe, covered himself with sackcloth, and sat in ashes. He made a proclamation and published through Nineveh by the decree of the king and his nobles, saying, "Let neither man nor animal eat anything; let them not feed, nor drink water; but let them be covered with sackcloth, both man and animal, and let them cry mightily to GOD. For who knows whether GOD will not turn and relent, and turn away from his fierce anger, so that we might not perish?" And so it was done as they said. All people from the greatest of them even to the least of them took off their fine robes and their jewelry, fasted, shaved their heads, and sat in ashes. Even the cattle and sheep were shorn, put in sack cloth, not fed, and placed in ashes.[481] They cried out or mooed or bleated to the LORD to deliver them from their distress. And GOD saw their works, that they turned from their evil way. GOD relented of the disaster which he said he would do to them, and he did not do it.

CHAPTER 4

---

[480] Of all things, JESUS's death and resurrection cites Jonah and how he was trapped inside the fish for three days.

[481] That mental image is so great. I elaborated on it for drama.

But it made Jonah extremely angry and disappointed.[482] He prayed to the LORD, and said, "LORD, this was why I hurried to Tarshish, for I knew that you are a gracious GOD. You are merciful, slow to anger, and abundant in loving kindness, and you relent of doing harm. I knew you would forgive Ninevah and not condemn them as they deserve. LORD, go ahead now. I have completed the job you had for me. I am done. Take my life from me, for it is better for me to die than to live."
The LORD said, "Is it fair for you to be angry?"
Jonah went out of the city, and sat on the east side, and there built himself a booth, and sat under it in the shade while he watched what would become of the city. While he sat, GOD planted a vine as a volunteer, and made it to come up over Jonah's booth as a shade to deliver him from discomfort. And Jonah was happy because of the vine. But then GOD arranged that a worm chewed on the vine, and it withered and died. When the sun arose, a hot east wind and the sun beat on Jonah's head. And he was exhausted, and asked that he might die, saying, "It is better for me to die than to live."
GOD said to Jonah, "Are you angry about the vine?" Jonah said, "Yes, and I am right to be angry."
The LORD said, "You have been upset for the vine, even though you did nothing to plant it, didn't water it, and which came up in a night and perished in the next night. Shouldn't I also be concerned for Nineveh, where there are more than one hundred twenty thousand persons who can't discern between right and wrong, and also many livestock?"

HOSEA

CHAPTER 1

Hosea received the word of the LORD, who told him to take as his wife, a prostitute.[483] This strange action was because the people of Israel were behaving like an unfaithful woman, and the LORD pledged to punish them if they did not turn from their ways. So he took a woman named Gomer[484] and she gave him a son. Each of these children was given a name to prophesy against Israel. The first, Jezreel, meant "GOD Will Sow." For GOD planned to sow destruction on the house of Israel. The second was a daughter, who he named "No Compassion" because he would no longer pardon Israel for its sins. The next child was a son named "Not My People," for GOD said they are Not My People and that he was not their I AM.
All the same, GOD promised that the same promise that they should number like the sand or stars in the sky was still valid and that one day, these Not My People would instead be called "Children of the Living GOD."

CHAPTER 2

GOD told Hosea to tell to Israel to tell its brothers "My People" and to tell its sisters "Compassion." Hosea compares Israel to a bride, warning that she could be stripped naked[485] and talks about how Israel has given herself over to prostitution, with its various idols and chasing after other loves than GOD. Israel had pursued Baal is its god, and had sought after foreign culture as a model, and thus lost its identity and its freedom. And GOD pledges to uncover its crimes in the sight of others, so that nobody will help it. All of the good things that GOD has given will thus be taken away, the crops will become a forest, and the animals will eat what remains. As for the celebrations and holidays, they will also end. GOD then says that the day is coming when GOD will no longer be called "LORD" but addressed as "DEAREST,"[486] And likewise, none of those gods called Baal[487] will be named, and he will

---

[482] I found this passage inspirational, because well before JESUS, it showed that GOD not only favored the Jews but cared deeply about people (and even animals). It also showed Jewish elitism for what it was, a stubborn judgement against those outsiders. This was why I took out Nahum, as it seems to be added just so GOD could punish Ninevah.
[483] A more accurate translation would be unfaithful woman, but she probably was also an actual prostitute.
[484] Gomer's name means "standing for the whole family." Whatever happens to Gomer is meant to depict the whole family of Israel.
[485] In much the same way as a prostitute is stripped of her clothing before sex for money, or a raped woman is stripped before sexual violence against her, the land and the people can have all that they own and all that they are taken away from them.
[486] Originally translated as husband. But GOD is not only our husband, he is also our wife. She is our DEAREST then, the one who we are betrothed to be married to.
[487] Baal means "lord", by the way. There were a whole bunch of deities that were spread around (usually storm gods). Zeus, Thor, etc. Usually these were an affair to a goddess of beauty and or fertility such as Venus. But the messed up thing was, Baal, Ishtar, and Tammuz (their son) comprised a false Trinity. This continued under Catholicism, with Mary acting as a stand in for Ishtar. No, Mary is *not* the Mother of GOD; no, she is *not* the Queen of Heaven. She is a normal woman, stop deifying her.

end the war and put things to rest. GOD says that he will betroth Israel to himself forever, and then he will have compassion to No Compassion, and will tell Not My People that "You Are My People." And they will also say, "You are my GOD." All of this GOD told Hosea to tell Israel, and he did so.

CHAPTER 3

GOD said to Hosea, "Go again, love the woman who loves another, and is an adulteress, even as the LORD loves the children of Israel, though they turn to other gods, and love cakes of raisins." This was the same woman who had been called a prostitute and an unfaithful woman. She had left Hosea for a man who initially treated her well, and then sold her into slavery. And Hosea bought her back for fifteen pieces of silver, five bushels of barley, and a flagon of wine.[488] Hosea then prophesies against Israel, claiming that they worshiped foreign idols and were unfaithful, and that they vainly offered sacrifices. He says that like his former wife, if the people return to the LORD, after two days he will revive us, and on the third day we will rise again.[489]

Hosea contrasts the love of GOD which is like the spring rains that water the Earth with the love of mankind, which is more like the morning dew which evaporates quickly. Hosea tells the people of GOD's word on the matter, "For I desire mercy, and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of GOD more than burnt offerings."[490] He explains that they have broken the covenant, they have set up false kings that are not chosen by GOD, they have built large buildings as monuments to themselves and not to GOD, and they sold themselves to other nations. He predicts that their enemies will prevail against them, and any grain they manage to grow will be eaten by strangers. Likewise, they will become wanderers. His prophesies continue, but you get the point. Hosea's prophesies mostly end on a sour note.

But there is also hope. In the same way that he treated his wife, so too will GOD treat the people of Israel. He will redeem them, so they too know him as DEAREST. Then they also remember that they are betrothed to GOD.[491]

AMOS

CHAPTER 1

Amos was the child among the people of Tekoa, and he was a shepherd and a sycamore fig farmer from Teqoa, when the LORD came to him to speak about Israel. These were in the days of Uzziah, King of Judah, and in the days of Jeroboam the son of Joash, King of Israel, two years before the earthquake. He said: "The LORD will roar from Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem; and the pastures of the shepherds will mourn, and the top of Carmel will wither."

Amos spoke these words from the LORD: "For three transgressions, yes, for four, I will not turn away its punishment.

1. Because they have threshed the pregnant women of Gilead, and ripped them open.
2. Because they have carried away captives and delivered up the whole community to Edom, and did not remember the brotherly covenant.
3. Because they pursued their brother Edom and cast off all pity, and continued their wrath. Because they burned the bones of the king of Edom into lime
4. because they have rejected the LORD's law, and have not kept his statutes. Their false idols which they made, after which their fathers walked, have led them astray. They have sold the righteous for silver, and the needy for a pair of shoes. They trample on the dust of the earth on the head of the poor, and deny justice to the oppressed. A man and his father use the same maiden, to profane my holy name. And they lay themselves down beside every altar on clothes taken in pledge.[492]

Therefore, I will send a fire into the house of Hazael, and it will devour the palaces of Ben Hadad. I will break the bar of Damascus, and cut off the inhabitant from the Valley of Wickedness, and him

---

[488] This is part of an extended metaphor against Israel, mixed in with a prophecy of JESUS. Israel does go into exile, even though Hosea forgives his wife. Likewise, the price of sin must be paid. And GOD does so with JESUS's own life.

[489] Among Christians, this passage nearly always calls to mind JESUS's resurrection.

[490] This is one of JESUS's main themes against the Pharisees. They are fixated on sacrifice, yet have little use for mercy.

[491] There is more to Hosea, but most of the rest is bitter condemnation against Israel. Yes, we get it. But the emphasis ought to be that GOD intends redemption.

[492] This was reorganized into three or four reasons, when before it was about eight or nine reasons, many of which were repeats.

who holds the scepter from Beth Eden and the people of Aram will go into captivity to Kir. I will send a fire on the wall of Gaza, and it will devour its palaces. I will cut off the inhabitant from Ashdod and him who holds the scepter from Ashkelon, I will turn my hand against Ekron, and the remnant of the Philistines will perish. I will send a fire on the wall of Tyre, and it will devour its palaces. I will send a fire on Teman, and it will devour the palaces of Bozrah. I will kindle a fire in the wall of Rabbah, and it will devour its palaces, with shouting in the day of battle, with a storm in the day of the whirlwind, and their king will go into captivity. I will send a fire on Moab, and it will devour the palaces of Kerioth, and Moab will die with tumult, with shouting, and with the sound of the trumpet. And I will cut off the judge from their midst, and will kill all its officials with him. I will send a fire on Judah, and it will devour the palaces of Jerusalem. Yet I destroyed the Amorite before them, whose height was like the height of the cedars, and he was strong as the oaks; yet I destroyed his fruit from above, and his roots from beneath. Also I brought you up out of the land of Egypt, and led you forty years in the wilderness, to possess the land of the Amorite. I raised up some of your sons for prophets, and some of your young men for Nazirites. Isn't this true, you children of Israel? But you gave the Nazirites wine to drink, and commanded the prophets, saying, 'Do not prophesy.' I will crush you in your place, as a cart crushes that is full of grain. Flight will perish from the swift, and the strong won't strengthen his force, neither will the mighty deliver himself. Neither will he stand who handles the bow, and he who is swift of foot won't escape, neither will he who rides the horse deliver himself; and he who is courageous among the mighty will flee away naked on that day."

CHAPTER 2

Amos said to the people, "Hear this word that the LORD has spoken against you. You only have I chosen of all the families of the earth. Therefore the LORD will punish you for all of your sins. Do two walk together, unless they have agreed? Will a lion roar in the thicket, when he has no prey? Does a young lion cry out of his den, if he has caught nothing? Can a bird fall in a trap on the earth, where no snare is set for him? Does a snare spring up from the ground, when there is nothing to catch? Does the trumpet alarm sound in a city, without the people being afraid? Does disaster happen to a city, unless the LORD has done it? Likewise, GOD will do nothing without first revealing his secret to his servants, the prophets. The lion has roared. Who will not fear? GOD has spoken. Who can but prophesy? Proclaim in the palaces at Ashdod, and in the palaces in the land of Egypt, and say, 'Assemble yourselves on the mountain of Samaria, and see what unrest is in her, and what oppression is among them.' Indeed they do not know to do right who hoard plunder and loot in their palaces. Therefore thus says the LORD: an adversary will surround the land; and he will pull down your strongholds, and your fortresses will be plundered. As the shepherd rescues out of the mouth of the lion, so will the children of Israel be rescued, who sit in Samaria on the corner of a couch and on the silken cushions of a bed. Listen, and testify against the house of Jacob, says GOD, the GOD of hosts. For in the day that I visit the transgressions of Israel on him, I will also visit the altars of Bethel, and the horns of the altar will be cut off and fall to the ground. I will strike the winter house with the summer house; and the houses of ivory will perish, and the great houses will have an end."

Amos also said to the people, "Listen to this word from the LORD, you cows of Bashan, who are on the mountain of Samaria, who oppress the poor, who crush the needy, who tell their husbands, 'Bring us something to drink.' The LORD has sworn by his holiness: the days will come on you that they will take you away with hooks, and the last of you with fish hooks. You will go out at the breaks in the wall, everyone straight before her; and you will cast yourselves into Harmon. Bring your sacrifices every morning, your tithes every three days, offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving of that which is leavened, and proclaim free will offerings and brag about them. For this pleases you, you children of Israel. I also have given you cleanness of teeth[493] in all your cities, and lack of bread in every town; yet you haven't returned to me. I also have withheld the rain from you, when there were yet three months to the harvest; and I caused it to rain on one city, and caused it not to rain on another city. One place was rained on, and the piece where it did not rain withered. So two or three cities staggered to one city to drink water, and were not satisfied: yet you haven't returned to me. And I struck you with blight and mildew many times in your gardens and your vineyards. Your fig trees and your olive trees are

[493] As in, there isn't any food to make them dirty, not that they have great hygiene.

devoured by swarming locusts. Even so, you haven't returned to me. I even sent plagues among you like I did Egypt. I have slain your young men with the sword, and have carried away your horses; and I filled your nostrils with the stench of your camp, yet you haven't returned to me. I have overthrown some of you, as when GOD overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah, and you were like a burning stick plucked out of the fire. But still, you haven't returned to me. Therefore, I will do this to you, Israel. Prepare to meet your GOD, Israel. For, look, he who forms the mountains, and creates the wind, and declares to man what is his thought. He who makes the morning darkness and treads on the high places of the earth, the LORD, the GOD of hosts, is his name."
And the LORD spoke through Amos against Israel and its coming captivity, "Though you offer me your burnt offerings and meal offerings, I will not accept them. Neither will I regard the peace offerings of your fat animals. Take away from me the noise of your songs. I will not listen to the music of your harps. But let justice roll on like rivers, and righteousness like a mighty stream. Did you bring to me sacrifices and offerings in the wilderness forty years, house of Israel? No, you took up the Tent of Moloch, and the star of your god Rephan,[494] the images that you made to worship them. Therefore I will exile you to Babylon and beyond."

CHAPTER 3

And the LORD showed Amos a series of visions. The LORD showed Amos some locusts while the grains were shooting up. Then the LORD told Amos that like that grain devoured by locusts, so also would Israel be devoured up. The LORD also showed Amos a plumbline. Then the LORD said, "Look, I have set a plumb line in the midst of my people Israel. I will not again pass by them any more. The high places of Isaac will be desolate, the sanctuaries of Israel will be laid waste; and I will rise against the house of Jeroboam with the sword."
But Amaziah, the priest of Bethel sent to Jeroboam, King of Israel, saying, "Amos has conspired against you in the midst of the house of Israel. The land is not able to bear all his words. For he has said, 'Jeroboam will die by the sword, and Israel will surely be led away captive out of his land.'" And Amaziah also said to Amos, "You seer, go, flee away into the land of Judah, and there eat bread, and prophesy there, but do not prophesy again any more at Bethel. It is the king's sanctuary, and it is a royal house." But Amos answered Amaziah, "I was no prophet, neither was I a prophet's son; but I was a herdsman, and a farmer of sycamore figs. The LORD took me from following the flock, and the LORD said to me, 'Go, prophesy to my people Israel.' You tell me not to prophesy against Israel, and do not proclaim against the house of Isaac. But the LORD says these words to you: your wife will be a prostitute in the city, and your sons and your daughters will fall by the sword, and your land will be divided by line. And you yourself will die in a land that is unclean, and Israel will surely be led away captive out of his land."
After this, the LORD showed Amos another vision. He saw a basket of summer fruit. And the LORD told him that like this basket, Israel was ripe to be taken. There would be a great deal of wailing, and dead bodies would be many. The LORD gave this message to Amos, "Hear this, you who trample the needy, and destroy the poor of the land. You say, 'When will the new moon be gone, that we may sell grain? And the Sabbath, that we may market wheat, making the ephah small, and the shekel large, and dealing falsely with balances of deceit? When may we buy the poor for silver, and the needy for a pair of shoes, and sell the sweepings with the wheat?' I will cause the sun to go down at noon, and I will darken the earth in the clear day. I will turn your feasts into mourning, and all your songs into lamentation. I will make you wear sackcloth on all your bodies, and baldness on every head. I will make it like the mourning for an only son, and its end like a bitter day.[495] The days come that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the word of the LORD. They will wander from sea to sea, and from the north even to the east, they will run back and forth to seek the word of the LORD, but will not find it. They will fall, and never rise up again."

CHAPTER 4

Then the LORD stood beside the altar, and he instructed Amos, "Strike the tops of the pillars, break them in pieces, that the thresholds may shake. Likewise, I will kill the last of them with the sword.

---

[494] The Babylonian name of the Roman god Saturn.
[495] This happened during the crucifixion.

There will not one of them flee away, and there will not one of them escape. Even if they dig down into Sheol, there my hand will take them, there I will bring them down. Though they hide themselves in the top of the highest mountain, my hand will reach them. Even if they be hid from my sight in the bottom of the sea, there I will command the leviathan, and it will bite them."[496]
But the LORD also foretold to Amos that he would restore Israel. He would bring it back from captivity, rebuild its ruined cities, and the people would plant vineyards in their land and drink from them. They would make gardens and eat their fruit, and like these, they will be planted in the land and not driven out any more.

ISAIAH

CHAPTER 1

Isaiah was the son of Amoz,[497] who saw visions and prophecies concerning Jerusalem (and to some extent Judah). Unlike other prophets, his backstory is not well-known. However, according to rabbinic tradition, when a prophet's father's name is mentioned, his father was also a prophet, so Isaiah may have been a second-generation prophet.
Isaiah compared Israel with an ox who had lost sight of its owner. It had become a sinful nation filled with the corrupt. They had forsaken the LORD, becoming estranged from his teachings. While it was tempting to think that Israel would repent and return to GOD, Isaiah was dubious of that idea, saying, "Why should you be beaten more, that you revolt more and more?" He compared it to a body where all the head, heart, feet, and so on were covered with wounds and open sores, and no medicine had been done to close the wounds. They were not only wicked, but like a raided village. Their sins couldn't simply be punished, because the very problem was that they blamed GOD for all that happened to them. Isaiah compared this land to Sodom, which the LORD destroyed. Isaiah, speaking on behalf of the LORD, said, "What are the multitude of your sacrifices to me? I've had enough of the burnt offerings of rams, the blood of bulls, lambs, or goats. Bring no more vain offerings. Incense is an abomination to me, as are your new moons, Sabbaths, and appointed feasts. When you spread forth your hands, I will hide my eyes from you. When you make your prayers, I will not hear. Your hands are full of blood. Wash yourselves, make yourself clean. Cease to do evil, and learn to do good. Seek justice, relieve the oppressed, plead for the widow and orphan." And the LORD told Isaiah to say, "Come now, and let us reason together, though your sins are like Scarlett,[498] they will be washed white as snow." The LORD promised if they are obedient, he would give them the fruits of the land, and if they were in rebellion, they would fall to the sword. Isaiah then compared their city to a prostitute, their precious metals to dross, and said their wine was mixed with water.[499] He also compared them to thieves who take bribes. In response, the LORD told Isaiah that he would ally with Israel's enemies and turn against them. Zion itself will be redeemed, but those who forsake the LORD will be consumed.

CHAPTER 2

Isaiah the son of Amoz saw visions concerning Judah and Jerusalem. He saw the LORD judging between the nations, and people beating their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks for they would stop making war against each other. But he saw the people of Jacob as filled with gold and silver, with the worship of idols, and proud of their association with foreigners.[500] And he saw that GOD would come to sweep their idols away with the glory of his majesty, and that they would try to hide in the rocks to escape the presence of GOD when he judges such idols. But they will

---

[496] *The Runaway Bunny*! Except GOD here intends to kill them.
[497] Although you might be tempted to correct Amoz to Amos, as they are both prophets, and Amos would have been an older contemporary of Isaiah, it can't be done. Amoz is pronounced differently and written as אמוץ, while Amos is written as עָמוֹס so the text isn't like "like a lion" where you could say that maybe someone added or removed a stroke.
[498] As in Scarlett O'Hara. The color scarlet too, but that woman made a mess of her life in the film, which is why even her true love ditched her. Immanuel Kant talked about means and ends, and how people should be regarded as ends of themselves, not as means to an end. The idea that even her sins could be washed away, if she comes to her senses.
[499] This particular line is strange. Proverbs mentions Lady Wisdom mixing water and wine, which was the custom for making wine for ceremony rather than drinking. But here, the highlight is that the ceremonial wine is basically the weak stuff, just as the repentance of the Jewish people here does not have their heart in it.
[500] Note that the word is not Israel, which is Jacob after he redeemed himself, but the old version of him.

be shaken as an earthquake shakes the land.
And Isaiah saw visions. The LORD would take away supply and support for Jerusalem and Judah, leaving them without bread and water. Not only that, but their craftsmen, armies, and wise men were all leaving them. Instead, the young would lead with their impulses. And as a result, Israel will be oppressed. And Isaiah saw women and children defying the elders, and the crass acting against men of honor. And Jerusalem was ruined by such things. The poor and needy were neglected, so they reaped this punishment. The women of Israel were haughty and walked through town with flashy ornaments, so the LORD would make them have sores and their scalps bald. As for these ornaments, they would be taken away. And as to the men, they would fall by the sword.
But Isaiah also predicted a return from wickedness, speaking of a time when things would return to glory for the women wanted to live humbly and the men no longer practiced senseless war and the art of oppression. And Isaiah saw a vision of an Israel restored to beauty from desolation. For he saw that the LORD forgives those who are penitent.

CHAPTER 3

Isaiah told a story of a man who builds vineyard for his beloved on a fruitful hill. And he dug into it, gathered stones, planted the best vines, and made a wine press. But instead of proper wine grapes, he got wild grapes. Wondering what more he could do for this vineyard, he tore away its hedge and it got eaten and trampled. And he made it a wasteland, and refused to hoe it. Neither would any rain fall on this soil. Then he told that the house of Israel was like this vineyard for GOD, and that hoping for righteousness and justice, he instead got oppression and a cry of distress. He talked about how they play many fine instruments during their feasts, but they have forgotten the work of the LORD. So he will not protect them like the hedge, and they will be taken over into captivity. He pronounced woe against the people, for they called things that were wicked good and things that were good evil. They denied justice to the innocent, they took bribes, and they rejected law and sound reason. So the LORD was greatly angry at what they had done, and their crops in blossom would dry up as dust, because they have rejected the law of the LORD of hosts, and despised the word of the Holy One of Israel. And he would send the other nations against them, like lions seeking after prey.

CHAPTER 4

Then Isaiah saw another vision in the year that Uzziah died as ruler. He saw the LORD sitting on a throne, and his train was large enough to fill the entire temple.

And on either side of him, there were seraphim. And the seraphim covered their faces with the wings, for the LORD's glory was such that even they could not look upon his awesome presence. And they sang continually to one another, "Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts. The whole Earth is full of his glory." And as the LORD spoke, the foundations of the temple shook, and the room was filled with

smoke which did not come from the incense burned that was in the temple.
But Isaiah when seeing this, said to the LORD, "How can I speak to these people? I have seen the King of Hosts, the LORD. What is anything I say against one whose words can shake the Earth itself? I am unclean, and my words are unclean, and my people are unclean." The the LORD beckoned to his seraphim, and the seraphim carried a live coal to Isaiah, taken from the altar with tongs, and the LORD told Isaiah, "Eat this."[501] And he said to Isaiah, "This has touched your lips. The sins of your lips are forgiven."
Then GOD talked to his servants, "Who will I send? Who will I send?" And Isaiah found himself volunteering. And the LORD bewailed that the people's senses were dull, or they could also see such a thing, and turn away from their path. And Isaiah saw a vision of the cities being laid waste to. But even so, the LORD would set a remains like seeds or stocks to replant.

CHAPTER 5

Now Rezin and Pekah, two nearby kings made wars against Jerusalem but could not prevail. And the LORD said to Isaiah, "Go out now to meet Ahaz. Tell him that Razin and Pekah may plot against him, or against Judah, but do not pay it any mind. For their plans will come to nothing." And while Isaiah was speaking to Ahaz of the LORD's words, the LORD told Ahaz to ask a sign, and it would be done. But Ahaz would not put the LORD to the test, so the LORD was impatient with him. The LORD said, "You who try the patience of men, will you also try GOD's patience? Nevertheless, I will give you a sign. A virgin will conceive, and bear a son, and they will call his name Immanuel.[502] He will eat curds and honey when he knows to refuse the evil, and choose the good. For before the child knows to refuse the evil, and choose the good, the land whose two kings you abhor will be forsaken." And the LORD predicted many other signs, like that the land would be overrun by briars and thorns.
And a prophetess also bore a son through Isaiah, who the LORD told to call 'Maher Shalal Hash Baz.'[503] For before the child knows how to say, 'My father,' and, 'My mother,' the riches of Damascus and the spoil of Samaria will be carried away by the king of Assyria." Likewise, Isaiah was told about a mighty flood that would flow through the banks of in these words, "It will overflow and pass through, it will reach even to the neck. The stretching out of its wings will fill the breadth of your land, Immanuel."
He also was told the LORD of hosts will be a sanctuary, but also a stone for stumbling and a rock that makes them fall, and that many will stumble. And the people will be in anguish and darkness. But the LORD said to Isaiah, "But there will be no more gloom for her who was in anguish. In the former time, the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali was brought into contempt, but now he has made it glorious, by the way of the sea, beyond the Jordan, through Galilee of the nations. The people sitting in darkness have seen a great light. Those living in the land and shadow of death, on them a light has shined. He will multiply the nation, he increase its joy. They rejoice before him according to the joy in harvest, as men rejoice when they divide the spoil. For the yoke of his burden, and the staff of his shoulder, the rod of his oppressor, has been broken as in the day of Midian. For to us a child is born, to us a son is given. And the government will be on his shoulders. His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty GOD, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end, on the throne of David, and on his kingdom, to establish it, and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from that time on, even forever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this."
After this, the LORD predicted more doom for Israel, that it would be cut from head to tail in one day, and he said, "One will devour on the right hand and be hungry, they will eat on the left hand and they will not be satisfied, and everyone will eat the flesh of his own arm."[504] Finally, he predicted that Manasseh and Ephraim will be against Judah.

---

[501] I am a pretty good fan of *My Hero Academia*, so this phrasing made me laugh.
[502] Some people think that the prophecy of JESUS was a one-off. But read the text carefully. Within Ahaz's own generation, this sign was fulfilled. In the Bible, dreams are given twice if they are true, and fulfilled by GOD. Likewise, a prophecy that is fulfilled happens *twice*. Once to show that it is a true prophecy, and once to ultimately be fulfilled. So, there was an Immanuel here, and there was JESUS our Immanuel.
[503] Literally, "Speed the spoil, and hasten the booty."
[504] This prophecy is true. Jerusalem was taken and Israel was destroyed, and the final days of Israel involved literal cannibalism.

CHAPTER 6

The LORD spoke through Isaiah, "Woe to those who decree unrighteous decrees, and to the writers who write oppressive decrees. Woe to those who deprive the needy from justice, and to rob the poor among my people of their rights, that widows may be their spoil, and that they may make the fatherless their prey. What will you do in the day of visitation, and in the desolation which will come from afar? To who will you flee for help? For all this his anger is not turned away, but his hand is stretched out still." He pronounced judgement against Assyria and its king, for the LORD had found it to be a kingdom of idols, worse even than Jerusalem and Samaria.[505] So the LORD said for the people Israel, "Do not be afraid of the Assyrian, though he strike you with the rod, and lift up his staff against you, as Egypt did. For yet a very little while, and the indignation against you will be accomplished, and my anger will be directed to his destruction." So it is that even if they come under the yoke of Assyria, that will eventually be cast off. The LORD will cut down the mighty, even as one chops away the cedars of Lebanon.

And the LORD also said to Isaiah, "A branch will come out of the stock of Jesse, and a shoot out of his roots will bear fruit. The *Ruach ha Kodesh* will rest on him; the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD. His delight will be in the fear of the LORD. He will not judge by the sight of his eyes, neither decide by the hearing of his ears. Instead, with righteousness he will judge the poor, and decide with equity for the humble of Earth. Righteousness will be the belt of his waist, and faithfulness the belt of his waist. The lion will lie down with the lamb,[506] the leopard will live with the young goat, the calf and the young lion will graze together, and a little child will lead them. The cow and the bear will graze. Their young ones will lie down together. The lion will eat straw like the ox. The nursing child will play near a cobra's hole, and the weaned child will put his hand on the viper's den. They will not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain. For Earth will be full of the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea." And Isaiah saw a vision of this root of Jesse, and how all nations would seek his rule. And a remnant of Israel will be gathered together from Assyria, from Egypt, from Pathros, from Cush, from Elam, from Shinar, from Hamath, and from the islands of the sea. And he will set up a banner and assemble all the outcasts of Israel, and gather then from the four corners of the Earth. The LORD told Isaiah that the people would say, "I will give thanks to the LORD, for you were angry with me, but your anger has turned away and you comfort me. In the GOD of my salvation I will trust, and will not be afraid. For the LORD is my strength and my song, and he has become my salvation."

CHAPTER 7

The LORD showed Isaiah other signs, that the land would become desolate, and that even the sky above would show the chaos and disfavor of GOD. The stars of the sky and its constellations will not give their light, and the sun will be darkened in its going forth, nor will the moon will not cause its light[507] to shine. And the LORD predicted the fall of Babylon, comparing it to Sodom and Gomorrah. For the LORD sad that he would have compassion on Israel, and set the children of Jacob in their own land. The foreigner will join himself with them, and they will unite in this land. The LORD will break the power of oppressors in this way. And the LORD also said, "I will ascend into Heaven. I will exalt my throne above the stars of GOD. I will sit on the mountain of assembly, in the far north.[508] I will ascend above the heights of the clouds. I will make myself like the Most High." But as for the morning star,[509] the LORD predicts that it will be cut down and will fall to the ground. Isaiah is also told to prophesy against the Phillistines, "Do not rejoice, O Philistia, all of you, because the rod that struck

---

[505] This is a backhanded insult to the Jewish nations.

[506] This passage is reportedly changed with the Mandela Effect with the text supposed "actually" being that the wolf lives with the lamb. The reason that it is supposedly misremembered is that the Lion and Lamb are both JESUS. Even so, I'll change it back. Lions do in fact eat lambs on occasion.

[507] The Bible is sometimes quoted as supporting the theory that the Earth is a sphere. But here, the Bible claims that the light of the moon is its own, and I agree.

[508] There was a passage that I added in Acts about how GOD had stationed the North Star and the Southern Cross in their places. If I had any doubt that this works, there it is.

[509] Except in Revelation, the morning star represents Satan, which is pretty good proof that something is amiss with the text of Revelation. This star usually represents Venus. This is probably more about the cult of Ishtar/Venus that this represents than it is about the literal morning star.

you is broken. For out of the serpent's root an adder will emerge, and his fruit will be a fiery flying serpent. The firstborn of the poor will eat and the needy will lie down in safety, and I will kill your root with famine and your remnant will be killed. You are melted away, Philistia, all of you. For smoke comes out of the north, and there is no straggler in his ranks."[510] He also spoke of dire times for the Moabites, how their land would be desolate, they would wear sackcloth, every beard would be cut off and every head would be bald. In fact, their Nazirites,[511] would flee to Zoar to escape the sorrow of the land. He also pronounced judgement against Damascus, for it had forgotten its salvation the LORD, and likewise to Ethiopia and Egypt. But the LORD told Isaiah that the afflicted of his people will have refuge.

CHAPTER 8

The LORD spoke by Isaiah the son of Amoz, saying, "Go, and loosen the sackcloth from off your waist, and take your sandals off your feet." He did so, walking naked and barefoot. The LORD said, "As Isaiah has walked naked and barefoot three years for a sign and a wonder concerning Egypt and concerning Ethiopia, so the king of Assyria will lead away the captives of Egypt and the exiles of Ethiopia, young and old, naked and barefoot, and with buttocks uncovered, to the shame of Egypt."
Then Isaiah had a vision. He saw a fierce storm of wind sweeping through the Negev. He saw a treacherous man dealing treacherously, and great destruction. He saw Elam attacking. He saw them preparing a table with food and drink, oiling their shields, and keeping watch. Then the LORD said to Isaiah, "Go set a watchman. Let him declare what he sees. And when he sees chariots, horsemen in pairs, riders on camels, let him say so." And Isaiah saw the watchman telling of seeing a troop of men with horsement in pairs during the day. So he answered as the LORD told him, "Babylon is fallen, and all the engraved images of her gods are broken to the ground." And he asked the watchman about what he saw during the night. The watchman watched at night, the morning came, and another night.
And the LORD pronounced a burden on Arabia. They would lodge in the forests of Arabia, for they gave water and bread to fugitives, and they fled from battle. And Isaiah was told that Kedar would fall and that their archers that their land was known for would decline in number.
And the LORD told Isaiah that he would get rid of those currently in power and appoint his servant Eliakim the son of Hilkiah, and strengthen him, then commit government to his hand, and he would be father to Jerusalem and the house of Judah, and he would give the key to the house of David to him. And he would be fastened like a nail,[512] and he would be a throne of glory for his father's house. Then all glory will be hung on him, and the nail that was fastened will be cut off and the burden released.
And the LORD also pronounced burdens against Tyre, Sidon, and other lands. He told Isaiah that in seventy years, like a prostitute taking a harp, so also would Tyre be made to play prostitute. And these wages would be for those who dwell before the LORD, to eat sufficiently, and for durable clothing. And the other lands would also have a heavy burden loaded on them. For as the LORD said, "The LORD of hosts defiles all the pride of glory, and shames all the honored of Earth. The LORD makes Earth empty, makes it waste, turns it upside down, and scatters its inhabitants. As it is with the people so let it be for the priest, as it is with the servant let it be for the master, as it is with the maid let it be with the mistress, as with the buyer so with the seller, as with the creditor so with the debtor. The whole Earth is laid waste and scattered. The Earth mourns and fades away, lofty people languish. The sound of joy ceases and there is mourning and weeping. The city that never sleeps is thrown into confusion. Every store is closed, every house is shut so none may enter.[513] There is crying in the streets, and the mirth of the land is extinguished. The gates are destroyed and the city is in desolation. Then the people raise up their voices. They will shout for the salvation of the LORD. They cry aloud from the sea. Therefore glorify the LORD, the GOD of Israel, even in the islands of the sea."
And he continued, "The Earth is utterly broken, it is torn apart, and it is shaken violently. Its

---

[510] Phillistine has not existed since 5th century BC. Nowadays, the "Palestines" a fictional nation built around the same concept, claims they are the rightful occupants of Israel.
[511] The Moabites were Jewish. They were believed to be descendants of Lot through incest. So the Nazirite tradition of long hair was observed by them.
[512] In a sense, this is a Messianic prophecy, for JESUS was nailed firmly to the cross.
[513] Sounds like COVID times, to be honest.

disobedience is heavy on it, and it is bound to collapse. The LORD punishes the kings of Earth. And they are gathered in a dungeon. The moon are confounded, and the sun ashamed, for the LORD of hosts reigns in Jerusalem."[514]

CHAPTER 9

And Isaiah prayed to the LORD in response, "LORD, you are my GOD. I will exalt you. I will praise your name, for you have done wonderful things, things planned long ago, and you have done them in complete faithfulness. For you make cities into a heap, a fortress into a ruin, a palace ruled by the insolent into a shambles. These will never be rebuilt. You have been a stronghold to the poor, a stronghold to the needy in his distress, a refuge from the storm, and a shade from the heat when the blast of the dreaded ones is like a storm against the wall. The LORD of hosts makes all peoples a feast of fat things full of marrow, and a feast of choice wines. He destroys the veil that covers the people, the veil that is spread over all the nations. The LORD GOD wipes away tears from off all faces. This is our GOD. We have waited for him, and he will save us. This is the LORD. We have waited for him, and we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation.[515] This song will be sung throughout the land of Judah:

> *We have a strong city. He appoints salvation for walls and ramparts. Open the gates, that the righteous nation may enter, the one which keeps faith. You will keep him in peace, whose thoughts are fixed on you, because he trusts in you. Trust in the LORD forever, for the LORD is an everlasting Rock. For he has brought down those who dwell on high, in the lofty city. He lays it low to the ground and casts it to the dust. The feet of the poor tramples it down, the footsteps of the needy.*

In the path of your judgements, O LORD, have we waited for you. Your name and your renown are the desire of our soul. With my soul have I desired you in the night. My spirit within me will seek you early, for when your justice is in Earth, the inhabitants of the world learn righteousness. LORD, your hand is lifted up, yet they do not see. They see the zeal of the people, and are ashamed. Fire will consume your adversaries. LORD, you will ordain peace for us, for you have also worked all our works for us. LORD our GOD, the other people have had dominion over us and they claim their gods are above us. But only you will we honor. You have increased the nation, O LORD. You have enlarged all the borders of the land. LORD, in trouble our people sought you. They poured out a prayer when your chastening was on them. Like a woman with child near the time of her delivery, who cries out in her pangs, so also we have been for you LORD. We have been as with child, but only wind was born when we gave birth.[516] We have not worked any deliverance in Earth. Your dead will live, and my dead bodies will rise. Awake and shout for joy, you who dwell in the dust. For your dew is like the dew of the dawn, and Earth will bring forth the departed spirits. Come, my people, enter into your chambers, and shut your doors behind you. Hide yourself for a little moment, until the indignation is past. For the LORD comes to judge the inhabitants of Earth."

And Isaiah also prophesied, "The LORD with his fierce and great and mighty sword will punish leviathan,[517] the fleeing serpent. And he will kill the serpent. The LORD will watch over the land as if it were a vineyard, and will be its keeper. It will be watered and protected from harm night and day. If he should find briars and thorns, he will do battle, marching against them and burning them.[518] In days to come, Jacob will take root. Israel will blossom and bud. They will fill the surface of the world with fruit. Therefore, by this the iniquity of Jacob will be forgiven, and this is all the fruit of taking away his sin, that he makes all the stones of the altar as chalk stones that are beaten in pieces so that the idols and the incense altars will rise no more. For the fortified city is solitary, a habitation

---

[514] I generally dislike end times prophecies, so I changed it from future tense to an eternal present tense concerning punishment of dictators. From Hitler to Stalin, these rulers always are defeated by their own excesses. The LORD consistently punishes them, not at some future ideal time.

[515] As before, I'm turning a prophecy in future tense into a song of praise in present tense. For the LORD never stops doing good for us, even if our eyes cannot see it.

[516] Nothing to show for their pains. In the same way, abortion gives mothers an empty birth, where suffering produces nothing.

[517] The leviathan, usually depicted as a massive sea snake, is sometimes a metaphor for centralized human governments, particularly tyrannical or corrupt ones, as per the book *Leviathan* by Thomas Hobbes, where he argued for a social contract (as if governments really have to obey such things) ruled by an absolute sovereign. Personally, only GOD is absolute sovereign, and he governs mortal rulers by the mandate of Heaven. If a ruler is unjust, he will be overthrown.

[518] I guess GOD doesn't like blackberries?

deserted and forsaken, like the wilderness. The calf will feed there, and there he will lie down, and consume its branches. When its boughs are withered, they will be broken off. The women will come and set them on fire."
He continued to prophesy, as the spirit of the LORD came upon him, "The LORD will thresh the land, and you will be gathered one by one, children of Israel. A great trumpet will be blown, and those who were ready to perish and those who were outcasts will come, and they will worship the LORD in the holy mountain at Jerusalem. The fading flower of his glorious beauty, which is on the head of the fertile valley, will be like the first ripe fig before the summer which someone picks and eats as soon as he sees it. The LORD of hosts will become a crown of glory, a diadem of beauty to the residue of his people, a spirit of justice to him who sits in judgement, and strength to those who turn back the battle at the gate. Who will he teach knowledge? To who will he explain the message? Those who are weaned from the milk, and drawn from the breasts? For it is precept on precept, line on line, interpretation on interpretation. But he will speak to this nation with stammering lips and a strange language, and he will speak in parables and riddles. He will say, 'This is the resting place. Give rest to weary,' but they would not listen. Therefore the word of the LORD will be to them precept on precept, and they will be incapable of understanding, that they may go, fall backward, be broken, be snared, and be taken.[519] Therefore hear the word of the LORD, you scoffers, who rules this people in Jerusalem. Because the wicked have made a covenant with death, and are in agreement with Sheol. They believe themselves protected from the scourge to come, for they have hidden themselves with falsehood. Therefore thus says the LORD, 'I am laying in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tested stone, a precious cornerstone for a sure foundation, and the one who believes in him will not be put to shame. I will make justice and righteousness the plumb line.'[520] And those who have a covenant with death will find it to be no protection against itself. The hail will sweep away the refuge of lies, and the waters will overflow the hiding place. The covenant will be annulled, and they are no more."
Isaiah further addressed the crowd, "Give ear, and hear my voice. Listen, and hear my speech. Does he who plows to sow plow continually? Does he keep turning the soil and breaking the clods? When he has leveled its surface, doesn't he plant the dill, and scatter the cumin seed, and put in the wheat in rows, the barley in the appointed place, and emmer[521] as its borders? It is done as the LORD instructs. For the dill are not threshed with a sharp instrument, neither is a cart wheel turned over the cumin, but the dill is beaten out with a stick, and the cumin with a rod. Bread flour must be ground, so he will not always be threshing it. He drives the wheel of his threshing cart over it, but his horses do not grind it. So also the LORD instructs us."
Isaiah told the people of Israel that they were like drunkards who stagger, but no strong drink can be found anywhere nearby. Or they were in regard to vision and prophecy, like those told to read a book that is sealed, and after that is unsealed only to be given to a person that cannot read. And the LORD said through Isaiah, "These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. And in vain do they worship me, teaching instructions that are the commandments of humans. So I will destroy the wisdom of their wise, and the discernment of the clever I will nullify." For he told them that the ruthless would be brought to nothing, and those who do evil are cut off. So also are all who cause a person to be indicted, who lay a snare for the arbiter in the gate, and who deprive the innocent of justice with false testimony. And Isaiah prophesied against those who warned the prophets not to speak prophecy, and to those who wanted the prophets to tell them only pleasant things, "Because you despise this word, and trust in oppression and perverseness and rely on it, this iniquity will be to you like a breach ready to fall, swelling out in a high wall, whose breaking comes suddenly in an instant. He will break it as a potter's vessel is broken, breaking it in pieces without sparing, so that there won't be found among the broken piece a piece good enough to take fire from the hearth, or to dip up water out of the cistern. For the LORD has said to you that you will be strengthened by peace and quiet. But you refused and tried to run. So also your enemies will be swift. The LORD will wait, that he may be gracious to you, and therefore he will be exalted. He will wait that he may have mercy on you, for the

[519] As happened to the Pharisees and scribes that challenged JESUS. I only half understand some of these prophecies but this seems in common with JESUS speaking in parables.
[520] A reference to Amos's prophecies.
[521] A wheat hybrid that is characterized as being a coarser grain with more of a husk than regular wheat.

LORD is a GOD of justice. Blessed are all those who wait for him. Though the LORD may give you the bread of adversity and the water of affliction, yet your teachers won't be hidden anymore, but your eyes will see your teachers. When you turn to the right hand and when you turn to the left, your ears will hear a voice behind you, saying, 'This is the way.' You will discard your engraved images of silver, and the plating of your molten images of gold. You will cast them away as an unclean thing. And he will give the rain for your seed with which you will sow the ground, and it will be rich and plentiful. Your livestock will feed in large pastures. The oxen and the young donkeys that till the ground will eat savory hay, which has been winnowed with the shovel and with the fork. There will be brooks and streams of water on every lofty mountain and on every high hill in the day of the great slaughter, when the towers fall. For the LORD will give healing and harm to you, depending on your faith and actions."

CHAPTER 10

Isaiah warned against those who put their faith in Egypt or Assyria, for the LORD could easily cause their undoing. Instead, he said that a proper king will not a fool nor a scoundrel, for the LORD would undo them also. Nor should women be at ease, but they should be extremely troubled at these times, and those who are righteous should strip naked and put on sackcloth, for a desolation was coming, and the land would be covered with thorns and briars. Yet those who do righteousness would be blessed, and their land would be filled with fertile farms and forests. As for those who destroyed without being punished and who betray without punishment, the LORD warns them through Isaiah that they indeed will be betrayed and destroyed. And so the sinners were afraid, and the godless were seized with trembling.

Then Isaiah asked, "Who among us can live with the devouring fire? Who among us can live with burning sorrow? He who walks righteously, and speaks blamelessly. He who despises the gain of oppressions, who gestures with his hands, refusing to take a bribe, who stops his ears from hearing of blood, and shuts his eyes from looking at evil. He will dwell on high. His place of defense will be the fortress of rocks. His bread will be supplied. His waters will be sure. Your eyes will see the king in his beauty. Your eyes will see Jerusalem, a quiet habitation, a tent that won't be removed. But others will see only a distant land, a land they cannot grasp."

He also prophesied, "The wilderness and the dry land will be glad. The desert will rejoice and blossom like the crocus. It will blossom abundantly, and rejoice even with joy and singing. They will see the LORD's glory, the excellence of our GOD. Then the eyes of the blind will be opened, and the ears of the deaf will be unstopped. Then the lame man will leap like a deer, and the tongue of the mute will sing. Waters will break out in the wilderness, and streams in the desert. The burning sand will become a pool, and the thirsty ground springs of water. Grass with reeds and rushes will be in the habitation of jackals, where they lay. And a highway will be there, and it will be called the Way of Holiness. The unclean will not pass over it, but it will be for those who walk in the Way."[522] And he told the people that the people of Zion would rejoice in their return to this land. After they were exiled first, of course.

CHAPTER 11

When Isaiah was doing all of his preaching, this wasn't happening in a vacuum. During this time, it was the fourteenth year of king Hezekiah, and the king of Assyria attacked all of the fortified cities of Judah, and captured them. And the king of Assyria sent Rabshakeh from Lachish to Jerusalem to king Hezekiah with a large army. He stood by the aqueduct from the upper pool on the highway to the Launderers' Field. And Eliakim the son of Hilkiah, Shebna the scrime, and Joah the recorder were also witnesses to this speech.

Rabshakeh said to them, "Ask Hezekiah, by what confidence is this in which you trust? Do you trust that empty words are strategy and power for war? Do you trust in the staff of this bruised reed, which if a man leans on it, it will go into his hand and pierce it? This is Pharaoh, king of Egypt, to all who trust in him. Or do you trust in the LORD? For if you trust in him, why has Hezekiah taken away the altars and holy places?" and he began to demand they make a pledge to the king of Assyria, offering a reward of two thousand horses, saying, "Have I come up now without the LORD against this land to destroy it? Your LORD said to me in a dream, 'Go up against this land, and destroy it.' So even he

[522] This may be why early Christians called themselves followers of the Way.

betrays you."
But Eliakim, Shebna and Joah said to Rabshakeh, "Please speak to us in Aramaic, for we understand it, and do not speak to us in the Hebrews' language in the hearing of the people."[523] But Rabshakeh said, "Are not my words here for everyone? Shouldn't the people on the wall also hear them, who will soon also be enslaved with you? After all, once enslaved, you also will eat your own dung and drink your own urine, just as they will. For the LORD desires you know humility under our subjugation."
And Rabshakeh stood and called out with a loud voice to get the attention of the Hebrew people, and he translated these words, "Do not let Hezekiah deceive you; for he will not be able to deliver you. Nor should you believe him when he says that the LORD will deliver you, that this city won't be given to the Assyrians. Have any of the gods of the nations delivered their lands from the hand of the king of Assyria? Have they delivered Samaria from my hand? The gods of these countries have not delivered their country out of my hand, who is the LORD that he should deliver Jerusalem out of my hand?" But wishing to undermine their faith, he did not tell them that it was the LORD's will that they should be taken, even though some of them might lose faith hearing the news anyway.
But they remained silent, and said nothing in reply, for the king's commandment was, "Do not answer him."
Then Eliakim, Shebna, and Joah came to Hezekiah with their clothes torn, and told him the words of Rabshakeh. When king Hezekiah heard it, that he tore his clothes, covered himself with sackcloth, and went into the LORD's house. He sent Eliakim and Shebna the scribe, and the elders of the priests, covered with sackcloth, to Isaiah the prophet, the son of Amoz. On behalf of Hezekiah they asked, "Will you ask the LORD your GOD concerning this matter? Has he heard the words of Rabshakeh who the king of Assyria his master has sent? Will not the LORD rebuke these words against himself?"
Isaiah said to them, "Tell your master, not be afraid of the words that you have heard. For the LORD is aware of how the servants of the king of Assyria have blasphemed. He will hear news, and will return to his own land. And there circumstance will cause him to fall by the sword." So Rabshakeh returned, and found the king of Assyria warring against Libnah, for he had heard that he was departed from Lachish. He heard news concerning Tirhakah king of Ethiopia, "He has come out to fight against you." So he died in battle, but before that, he sent messengers back saying, "Do not delude yourself into thinking the LORD will save you from the hand of Assyria. As all the nations experienced, so also will happen to you, whether or not I am here." Hezekiah read the letter, then went up to the LORD's house, and spread it before the LORD.
Hezekiah prayed to the LORD, saying, "LORD of hosts, the GOD of Israel, who is enthroned among the cherubim, you are GOD, even you alone, of all the kingdoms of Earth. You have made Heaven and Earth. Turn your ear, LORD, and hear. Open your eyes, LORD, and look. Hear all of the words of Sennacherib, who has sent to defy the living GOD. Truly, LORD, the kings of Assyria have destroyed all the countries and their land, and have cast their gods into the fire. They were no gods, but the work of men's hands, wood and stone, so they were no help when the Assyrians have destroyed them. Now therefore, LORD our GOD, save us from his hand, that all the kingdoms of Earth may know that you are the LORD, even you only."
Isaiah came to Hezekiah, "You have prayed to the LORD, and this is his answer. The virgin daughter of Zion has despised you and ridiculed you. The daughter of Jerusalem has shaken her head at you. Who have you defied and blasphemed? Against who have you exalted your voice and lifted up your eyes on high? Against the Holy One of Israel. You defied the LORD, and have said, 'With the multitude of my chariots I have come up to the height of the mountains, to the innermost parts of Lebanon. I will cut down its tall cedars and its choice fir trees. I will enter into its farthest height, the forest of its fruitful field. I have dug and drunk water, and with the sole of my feet I will dry up all the rivers of Egypt.' Have you not heard how the LORD has formed it in ancient times? Now the LORD has brought it to pass, that it should be yours to destroy fortified cities, turning them into ruinous heaps. Therefore their inhabitants had little power. They were dismayed and confounded. They were like the grass of the field, and like the green herb, like the grass on the rooftops when it is scorched by the east wind. But the LORD says, 'I know your sitting down, your going out, your coming in, and your raging

[523] These officials are not true Hebrews and/or they are afraid of the public knowing information. Like government bureaucrats everywhere, they keep the public in the dark.

against me. Because of your raging against me, and because your arrogance has come up into my ears, therefore I will put my hook in your nose and my bridle in your lips, and I will turn you back by the way by which you came.' This will be the sign to you, Hezekiah. You will eat this year that which grows of itself, in the second year that which springs from the same, and in the third year sow and reap and plant vineyards and eat their fruit. The remnant that is escaped of the house of Judah will again take root downward, and bear fruit upward. For out of Jerusalem a remnant will go forth, and survivors will escape from Mount Zion. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this. Therefore thus says the LORD concerning the king of Assyria, 'He will not come to this city, nor shoot an arrow there, neither will he come before it with shield, nor cast up a mound against it. By the way that he came, by the same he will return, and he will not come to this city. For I will defend this city to save it, for my own sake, and for David's sake.' The LORD so answers your prayers."
The LORD went out and struck one hundred and eighty-five thousand men in the camp of the Assyrians. When men arose early in the morning, these were all dead bodies.
So Sennacherib king of Assyria departed, went away, returned to Nineveh, and stayed there. As he was worshipping in the house of Nisroch[524] his god, his sons Adrammelech and Sharezer struck him with the sword, then they escaped into the land of Ararat. Esarhaddon his son reigned in his place.
Time passed, and Hezekiah was sick and near death. Isaiah came to him and told him, "Set your affair in order, for the LORD says you will die soon." Hezekiah faced the wall and prayed to the LORD, "Remember now, the LORD, I beg you, how I have walked before you in truth and with a perfect heart, and have done that which is good in your sight." Now the LORD remembered also that he had punished Hezekiah precisely because his heart hadn't been pure, but GOD was touched by his devotion. And Isaiah said to Hezekiah, "The LORD has heard your prayer, and has seen your tears. You will live fifteen years more." And Israel was delivered out of the hands of the Assyrians. And Hezekiah said these words after his sickness left him,

> *I said, "In the middle of my life I go into the gates of Sheol. I am deprived of the residue of my years." I said, "I will not see the LORD in the land of the living. I will not look on humankind any longer with the inhabitants of the world. My dwelling is removed, and is carried away from me like a shepherd's tent. I have rolled up, like a weaver, my life. He will cut me off from the loom. From day even to night you will make an end of me. I wait patiently until morning. He breaks all my bones. From day even to night you will make an end of me. I moan like a dove. My eyes weaken looking upward toward the LORD. I am oppressed. Be my security." What will I say? I will walk carefully all my years because of the anguish of my spirit. LORD, men live by these things, and my spirit finds life in all of them; you restore me, and cause me to live. For peace I had great anguish, but you have in love for me, and delivered my spirit from corruption. You have cast all my sins behind your back. For Sheol can't praise you, and death can't celebrate you. Those who go down into the pit can't hope for your truth. The living will praise you, as I do this day. The father will make known your truth to the children. The LORD will save me. Therefore we will sing my songs with stringed instruments all the days of our life in the house of the LORD.*

Now Isaiah had said, "Let them take a cake of figs, and lay it for a poultice on the boil, and he will recover." Hezekiah also had said, "What is the sign that I will go up to the house of the LORD?" After this, many people from outside lands heard about this event.
Marduk-Baladan the son of Baladan, king of Babylon, sent letters and a present to Hezekiah; for he heard that he had been sick, and had recovered. Hezekiah was pleased with these letters, and showed the Babylonians his precious things. There was nothing in his house, nor in all his dominion, that Hezekiah did not show them.
Then Isaiah the prophet came to king Hezekiah, and asked him, "What did these men say? Where did they come from to you?" Hezekiah said, "They have come from a country far from me, even from Babylon." Then said Isaiah to Hezekiah, "The LORD says that all that is in your house, and that which your fathers have stored up until this day, will be carried to Babylon. Nothing will be left. They will take away your descendants who will issue from you, who you will father, and they will be eunuchs in

[524] There is no known Assyrian god named Nisroch. It is likely a miswriting is the Hebrew letters for "Nimrod." Effectively, they deified Nimrod, the guy who built Babel.

the king of Babylon's palace."
Then Hezekiah said to Isaiah, "The LORD's word which you have spoken is good." He said moreover, "For there will be peace and truth in my days." And thus, he accepted the LORD's will, for good or bad.

CHAPTER 12

The LORD came to Isaiah and told him these words, "Speak tenderly to Jerusalem; and call out to her that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned, that she has received of the LORD's hand double for all her sins. The voice of one who calls out in the wilderness, prepare the way of the LORD. Make his roads straight. And every valley will be filled, and every mountain and hill will be made low, and the uneven will be made level, and the rough places a plain. And the glory of the LORD will be revealed, and all humanity will see the salvation of GOD together; for the mouth of the LORD has spoken."
And a voice came saying, "Cry." And Isaiah asked, "What will I cry?" And the voice said, "All flesh is like grass, and all its glory is like the flower of the field. The grass withers, the flower fades, because the LORD's breath blows on it. Surely the people are like grass. The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of the LORD stands forever."
The LORD came to Isaiah and told him these words, "You who tell good news to Zion, go up on a high mountain. You who tell good news to Jerusalem, lift up your voice with strength. Lift it up. Do not be afraid. Tell the cities of Judah to behold your GOD. The LORD will come as a mighty one, and his arm will rule for him. His reward is with him, and his recompense before him. He will feed his flock like a shepherd. He will gather the lambs in his arm, and carry them in his bosom. He will gently lead those who have their young. Who has measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, and marked off the sky with his span, and calculated the dust of Earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance? Who has known the mind of the LORD? From who did mankind take counsel, and who instructed him, and taught him in the path of justice, and taught him knowledge, and showed him the way of understanding? The nations are like a drop in a bucket, and are regarded as a speck of dust on a balance. He lifts up the islands like a very little thing. It is the LORD who sits above the circle of Earth, who stretches out Heaven like a curtain, and spreads it out like a tent to dwell in. It is the LORD who brings princes to nothing, who makes the judges of Earth meaningless. He merely blows on them, and they wither, and the whirlwind cuts them down as stubble," but Isaiah also provided comfort, "Be aware, those who trust in the LORD. For he gives power to the weak. He increases the strength of him who has no might. Even the youths faint and get weary, and the young men utterly fall. But those who wait for the LORD will renew their strength. They will mount up with wings like eagles. They will run, and not be weary. They will walk, and not faint."

CHAPTER 13

The LORD came to Isaiah and told him these words, "Thus says the LORD who created you, and he who formed you. Do not be afraid, for I have redeemed you. I have called you by your name. You are mine." He told Isaiah to repeat these words to the people, "When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they will not overflow you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned, and the flame will not scorch you. For I am the LORD your GOD, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior. Since you have been precious and honored in my sight, and I have loved you; therefore I will give people in your place, and nations instead of your life. Do not be afraid, for I am with you. Let all the nations be gathered together, and let the peoples be assembled. Who among them can declare this, and show us former things? Let them bring their witnesses, that they may be justified. You are my witnesses, who I have chosen; that you may know and believe me, and understand that I am him. Before me there was no GOD formed, neither will there be after me. I am the LORD; and besides me there is no Savior. I have declared, I have saved, and I have shown, and there was no strange god among you. Therefore you are my witnesses. "
The LORD said to them, "Do not remember the former things, and do not consider the things of old. I do a new thing. I make a way in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert. The animals of the field will honor me, the jackals and the ostriches, because I give water in the wilderness and rivers in the desert, to give drink to my people, my chosen, the people which I formed for myself, that they might set forth my praise. Yet you have not called on me, but you have been weary of me, Israel. You have not brought me of your sheep for burnt offerings; neither have you honored me with your sacrifices. I

have not burdened you with offerings, nor wearied you with frankincense. You have bought me no sweet cane with money, nor have you filled me with the fat of your sacrifices; but you have burdened me with your sins. You have wearied me with your iniquities. I am the one who blots out your transgressions for my own sake; and I will not remember your sins. Put me in remembrance. Let us plead together. Set forth your case, that you may be justified. Your first father sinned, and your teachers have transgressed against me. Because of their sin and yours, I will profane the princes of the sanctuary; and I will make Israel a curse and a reviling."
Isaiah spoke about a man acquiring a tree from a forest, cuts some for heating himself, some more for feeding himself and the rest he uses to forge an idol. His point was that even a small portion is still an idol that distracts from GOD. But Isaiah reminded the people to remember that GOD still thinks of Israel as his servant that he has formed, and that Israel's sins will be redeemed. The LORD is our shepherd. There is no one else besides the LORD, and he watches after us and strengthens us. For the LORD says, "I form the light, and create darkness. I make peace, and create calamity. I, the LORD, do all these things."[525] And Isaiah reminded the people that they are the LORD's creation, and that we should not be like clay pots who forgot they were made by a potter, so also should we humans understand that we are made by GOD. Israel would be saved by the LORD with an everlasting salvation. So he instructs the people to assemble before the LORD, and to leave their idols behind. He told them that only in the LORD is righteousness and strength, and all those who were incensed against him will be disappointed, for in the LORD, all the descendants of Israel will be justified.
Isaiah also contrasted the idols that the people made as graven images to the actual image of GOD that humans are, comparing their organs to things made of iron or bronze. He then told them they would be test by affliction, as silver is tested, in order to refine it. He continued with a warning from the LORD that there is no peace for the wicked. Isaiah told the people of Israel that they are called as GOD's people even from the womb. But he told them they act like the LORD has forsaken them, as though such a thing were possible. And he used the analogy as a nursing mother to explain why that idea was absurd. The LORD said if a mother ever could leave her child, a certificate of divorce or a notice that she had been sold would be needed, and so also will the LORD not turn his back on us.
The LORD promised them that the enemies of Israel will ultimately cannibalize themselves, so that everyone will know that GOD is the Savior and Redeemer of the people of Israel. But apparently, they needed convincing of GOD's power to redeem or deliver from harm, so the LORD explained that he could dry the sea with a word, cause fish to rot and stick, and for people to die of thirst. He also explained, "I clothe Heaven with blackness, and I make sackcloth their covering." Therefore, when GOD is with us, we have no enemies to threaten us. The LORD said that his salvation is gone forth, and the islands with for him. The LORD said the Heaven vanishes away like smoke, and Earth waxes old like a garment; and those who dwell in it will die, but his salvation will be forever and his righteousness will not be abolished.

CHAPTER 14

Isaiah saw a prophetic vision from the LORD, and he prayed to the LORD concerning it, "LORD, who has believed our message? And to who has the arm of the LORD been revealed? For he grew up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of dry ground. He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him, nor special appearance that we should desire him. He was despised, and rejected by people. He was a man of sorrows, and very familiar with illness. He was despised, and we did not value him. Surely he bore our diseases, and took our pains. Yet we considered him stricken, and struck down by GOD, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions, and he was crushed for our iniquities. The punishment that brought our peace was on him; and by his wounds we are healed."[526] For Isaiah saw a vision from the LORD that was very vivid, but which he could not begin to understand. For the LORD had a plan that was beyond his comprehension.
And his vision continued, "All we like sheep have gone astray. Everyone has turned to his own way.

---

[525] Unlike modern images of GOD at war with Satan, which appear to be compromised by Zoroastrian heresies, the classic depiction of GOD is that he rules this world, and that everything good or bad is his doing, for our benefit. Satan, as depicted in Job, is only an accusing angel, and in fact is working for GOD. This is more Taoist than Zoroastrian.
[526] In many Jewish texts, this is profoundly altered. They claim that this passage speaks about Israel. But Israel cannot suffer for the sake of itself. This is clearly about JESUS.

Yet the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all, he has become a curse on our behalf. He was oppressed, yet when he was afflicted he did not open his mouth. He was led like a sheep to the slaughter, and like a lamb before its shearer is silent, so he does not open his mouth. In his oppression, his justice was taken away. Who will consider his generation? For his life was cut off from Earth, he has been raised above it as an example to see. For the transgression of my people he was led to death. And they assigned his grave with the wicked and with the rich in his death, though he had committed no sin, nor was deceit found in his mouth. Although his soul is made a reparation offering, the desire of the LORD will succeed by his hand. After the suffering of his soul, the righteous one, will make many righteous, and he will bear their iniquities. Therefore I will divide him a portion with the great, and he will divide the spoil with the strong. Because he poured out his soul to death, and he was numbered with transgressors, yet he bore the sins of many, and made intercession for their transgressions." At this, Isaiah's vision ended.

And those around him wondered to what he was referring. So they concluded, "Isaiah clearly refers to the people Israel. Israel will surely suffer greatly. Did not Isaiah predict our captivity?" Now some of them mentioned that he seemed to be referring to a man, but they were shouted down, "GOD is not human, that he should lie, not a human being, that he should change his mind. Does he speak and then not act? Does he promise and not fulfill?" And so they declared those who proposed otherwise to be teaching false doctrine. And thus it was that the people of Israel ignored his prophecy, not by rejecting it, but by wholly misunderstanding it.

CHAPTER 15

Isaiah told the word of the LORD, "Do not be afraid, for you will not be put to shame, nor will you be humiliated, for you will not be disgraced. For you will forget the shame of your youth, and the disgrace of your widowhood you will remember no more. For your husband is your Creator; the LORD of hosts is his name. The Holy One of Israel is your Redeemer; and he will be called GOD of the whole Earth. For the LORD has called you as a wife forsaken and grieved in spirit, even a wife of youth, when she is cast off. For a small moment have you forsaken him,[527] but with everlasting loving kindness will I have mercy on you. You turned away from him, and he was angry. But like the waters of Noah, the LORD has sworn that he will not stay mad at us. Even if the mountains depart and the hills are removed, the LORD will keep his loving kindness. And his covenant of peace will not be taken away." And he compared the people of Israel to a house. It may be hit by storms and battered without comfort, but it will be set with beautiful stones in its foundation and its roof, and its walls will have all manner of beauty attached. And Isaiah told them that regardless of their hardship, the LORD would protect them. No weapon against them would come to any merit, nor will any tongue be used to condemn them.

And the LORD also said these words,"Come, everyone who thirsts, to the waters. Come, he who has no money, buy, and eat. Yes, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.[528] Why do you spend money for that which is not bread? Why spend your labor for that which doesn't satisfy?[529] Listen diligently to me, and eat you that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness. Turn your ear, and come to me; hear, and your soul will live. And I will make an everlasting covenant with you, the faithful kindnesses of David. You will call a nation that you do not know, and it will run towards you, because the LORD has glorified you. Seek the LORD while he may be found, call upon him while he is near, let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts. Let him return to the LORD, for he will have mercy on him and abundantly pardon. For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, but as the Heaven is above the Earth, so are my thoughts and my ways greater than your thoughts and ways." And the LORD spoke about how he makes the rain and snow come, and it doesn't return there but makes the land green with seeds sprouting and buds opening to bloom.

And the LORD said through Isaiah, "A Redeemer will come from Zion, and he will turn away transgression from Jacob. As for me, this is my covenant with them. My Spirit who is on you, and my

---

[527] I do not believe GOD truly forsakes us. We believe this to be the case when we lose connection, but more often than not, we are the ones that are not faithful.

[528] This is similar to what Lady Wisdom (and Mistress Folly, to an extent) says to strangers to welcome them.

[529] This is similar to what JESUS says

words which I have put in your mouth, will not depart out of your mouth, nor out of the mouth of your children, nor out of the mouth of your children's children, from now on and forever."
The LORD continued with these words, "Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the LORD has risen upon you.[530] For darkness will cover Earth, but the LORD will arise on you, and his glory will be seen on you. Lift up your eyes all around and see. They all gather themselves together, they come to you. Your sons will come from far and your daughters will be carried in the arms. Then you will see and be radiant and your heart will thrill and be enlarged, because the abundance of the sea will be turned to you. Whereas you have been forsaken and hated, so that no man passed through you, I will make you an everlasting excellency, a joy of many generations. You will also drink the milk of the nations, and will nurse from royal breasts. And you will know that I, the LORD, am your Savior, and your Redeemer, the Mighty One of Jacob. Violence will no more be heard in your land, destruction nor calamity within your borders; but you will call your walls Salvation, and your gates Praise. As for the sun, it will no longer be your light by day, nor will the moon shine for illumination at night, but the LORD will be your everlasting light and your GOD will be your glory. Your sun will no more go down, neither will your moon withdraw itself, for the LORD will be your everlasting light and the days of your mourning will be ended. Your people also will be all righteous and they will inherit the land forever. They are the branch of my planting, the work of my hands, that I may be glorified. The little one will become a thousand, and the small one a strong nation."

CHAPTER 16

The LORD said to Isaiah to speak to the people, "The *Ruach ha Kodesh* is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and an opening of the eyes to the blind, to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor,[531] to comfort all who mourn and to appoint to those who mourn in Zion: a garland for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness. These things are so that they may be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that he may be glorified. Strangers will stand and feed your flocks, and foreigners will be your plowmen and your vinedressers. But you will be named the priests of the LORD, men will call you the ministers of our GOD, and you will boast in their glory. Instead of your shame and instead of dishonor they will rejoice in their portion, for everlasting joy will be to them. For I, the LORD, love justice. Their offspring will be known among the nations, and their descendants among the peoples. All who see them will acknowledge them, that they are the offspring which the LORD has blessed. I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my heart will be joyful in my GOD. For he has clothed me with the garments of salvation, he has covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself with a garland, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels. For as the soil brings forth its bud, and as the garden causes the things that are sown in it to spring forth; so the LORD will cause righteousness and praise to spring forth before all the nations."
Nevertheless, Isaiah saw injustice happen, and the LORD commanded him to speak, "For Zion's sake I will not keep silent, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until her righteousness go forth as brightness, and her salvation as a lamp that burns. The nations will see your righteousness, and all kings your glory, and you will be called by a new name, which the mouth of the LORD will name. You will also be a crown of beauty in the hand of the LORD, and a royal diadem in the hand of your GOD. And you will no more be termed Forsaken, neither will your land any more be termed Desolate, for the LORD delights in you, and your land will be married. For just as a young man marries a virgin, and as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, so your GOD will rejoice over you. I have set watchmen on your walls, Jerusalem, and they will never be silent, day or night. You who call on the LORD, take no rest, and give him no rest until he establishes Jerusalem as a praise in Earth. No longer will your enemies eat the grain and wine that your have worked to make, for your land will be yours. Go through the gates, prepare the way of the people. Build up the highway, gather out the stones, and lift up a banner for the peoples. The LORD has proclaimed to the remotest part of Earth, 'Say to the daughter of Zion that your salvation comes. His reward is with him, and his recompense before him.'

[530] Literally where the term "Rise and shine" comes from.
[531] I removed a part about the LORD's vengeance. The LORD is here for justice and mercy, not for vengeance. This is why the Jewish people rejected what JESUS said.

They will call them the holy people, the redeemed of the LORD. And you will be called Sought Out and A City Not Forsaken."

CHAPTER 17

And the LORD said, "I have shown myself to those who did not ask for me. I was found by those who did not seek me. I said, 'Here I am. Here I am,' to a nation that did not call on my name. All day long I have stretched out my hands to a disobedient and obstinate people, who walk in a way that is not good, following their own thoughts. These are a people who provoke me to my face continually as they sacrifice in gardens and burn incense on bricks, who sit among the graves, and lodge in the secret places. They eat pig's flesh and the broth of abominable things is in their vessels. They say, 'Keep your distance, do not come near to me, for I am holier than you.' These are a smoke in my nose, a fire that burns all the day. I will not keep silence, but will recompense, not only their own iniquities, but also the iniquities of their fathers, who have burned incense on the mountains, and blasphemed me on the hills. As the new wine is found in the cluster, and one says, 'Do not destroy it, for a blessing is in it,' so will I do for the sake of my servants, that I may not destroy them all. And I will bring forth offspring from Jacob, and from Judah they will inherit my mountains. And my chosen will inherit it, and those who serve me will dwell there. Sharon will be a fold of flocks, and a place for herds to lie down in, for my people who have sought me. But you who forsake the LORD, who forget my holy mountain, I will destine you to the sword, and you will all bow down to the slaughter. Because when I called you did not answer, when I spoke you did not listen. You did that which was evil in my eyes, and chose that in which I did not delight. Therefore thus says the LORD GOD, my servants will eat but you will be hungry, my servants will drink but you will be thirsty, my servants will rejoice but you will be disappointed, my servants will sing in gladness of heart but you will cry for sorrow of heart. You will leave your name for a curse to my chosen, and the LORD GOD will kill you, and he will call his servants by another name. For I create new Heaven and a new Earth, and the former things will not be remembered, nor come into mind. But be you glad and rejoice forever in that which I create. For I create in Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people will have everlasting joy. I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in my people; and there will be heard in her no more the voice of weeping and the voice of crying. There will be no more there an infant of days, nor an old man who has not filled his days. When one is a hundred years old they will be considered a child, or will considered be accursed or a sinner. They will build houses, and inhabit them, and they will plant vineyards and eat their fruit. Gone will be building or planting, only for another to benefit. My chosen will long enjoy the work of their hands. They will not labor in vain nor bring forth for calamity, for they are the descendants of the blessed of the LORD, and their offspring with them."

For the LORD said, "Heaven is my throne, and Earth is the footstool of my feet. Where then is the house you could build for me? And where then is the place of my rest? For all these things has my hand made, and so all these things came to be, but to this man will I to him who is humble and of a contrite spirit, and who trembles at my word. He who slaughters an ox is like one who strikes down a man, he who sacrifices a lamb as he who breaks a dog's neck, he who offers an offering as he who offers pig's blood, he who burns frankincense as he who blesses an idol. They have chosen their own ways, and their soul delights in their abominations. I also will choose their delusions, and will bring their fears on them. Because when I called, no one answered. Instead, they did that which was evil in my eyes, and chose that in which I did not delight. Hear the word of the LORD, you who tremble at his word. Your brothers who hate you, who cast you out for my name's sake, have said, 'Let the LORD be glorified, that we may see your joy,' but it is those who will be disappointed. Before she travailed she brought forth, before her pain came she delivered a son. Who has heard such a thing? Who has seen such things? Will a nation be brought forth at once? For as soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children. Will I bring to the birth, and not cause to bring forth? Rejoice with Jerusalem, and be glad for her, all you who love her. Rejoice with her, all you who mourn over her, that you may be delighted with the abundance of her glory." For he said, "I will call you back as if you were a wife deserted and distressed in spirit, my wife who I married young, only to be rejected. For a brief moment, there was rejection. But with deep compassion, I will bring you back. You could not see my face for a moment, but with my kindness is everlasting, and I will never abandon you. For I will have compassion on you, like the days of Noah, when I swore that the waters of Noah would never again

cover the earth. So also I have sworn not to be angry with you, never to rebuke you again. Though the mountains be shaken and the hills be removed, yet my unfailing love for you will not be shaken nor my covenant of peace be removed."[532]
And the LORD continued, "I will extend peace to her like a river, and the glory of the nations like an overflowing stream: and you will nurse. You will be carried on her side, and will be dandled on her knees. As one who his mother comforts, so will I comfort you; and you will be comforted in Jerusalem. You will see it and your heart will rejoice, for the hand of the LORD will be known toward his servants, and he will have indignation against his enemies. For the LORD will come with fire, and his chariots will be like the whirlwind. For as the new Heaven and the new Earth, which I will make, will remain before me, so your descendants and your name will remain. From one new moon to another, and from one Sabbath to another, all flesh will come to worship before me. They will go forth, and look on the dead bodies of the men who have transgressed against me: for they will be loathsome to all humankind."
With these and other words, Isaiah spoke of both judgement and salvation at the hands of the LORD. But Isaiah did not earn popularity with his strong words. He is believed to have been martyred by being sawed in half under the ordered of Manasseh, Hezekiah's descendant. Yet even so, Isaiah loved the LORD and followed his will. As for the man who is believed to have killed him, he initially led a life of idolatry, but eventually he turned to the LORD, and asked for forgiveness. And the LORD forgave him, and he was restored as king. And all idols were removed from the land of Judah.

JEREMIAH

CHAPTER 1

Jeremiah was priest's son, and was expected as an adult to do the offerings and sacrifices of the priesthood, at the time of Josiah the king. And he came with his parents to celebrate the restoration of Solomon's temple and the recovery of the law of Moses.[533] And his father showed the greatness of Israel, and how he believed her cities would never be destroyed. And he showed him the temple.
But the Word of GOD[534] came to Jeremiah in a dream. The LORD said to Jeremiah, "Before I formed you in the belly, I knew you. Before you came forth out of the womb, I consecrated you as a prophet. I have appointed you a prophet to the nations." But Jeremiah said that he did not know how to speak as he was only a child. Yet GOD told him not to be concerned as even though he was a child, he would be given words to say. Nor should he be afraid of others for GOD mentioned he would deliver Jeremiah, saying, "I have this day set you over the nations and over the kingdoms, to pluck up and to break down and to destroy and to overthrow, to build and to plant." And this was in the days before the fall of the temple of GOD.
Now GOD showed Jeremiah a vision, and asked him what he saw. And Jeremiah said that he saw the branch of an almond tree.[535] And Jeremiah was praised for seeing this, as GOD said that so also it would be with his word and actions. He then showed Jeremiah a boiling cauldron tipping away from the north. And GOD said, "Out of the north, evil will break out, and I will call all the families of the north and they will come, and each will set a claim for the throne against the gates of Jerusalem, against its walls, against the cities of Judah. And I will utter judgement against those who have forsaken me and burned incense to other gods, and who have worshiped the work of their own hands." And he told Jeremiah to speak all the words commanded to him, and not to be ashamed or dismayed, lest GOD be ashamed of him. GOD told Jeremiah that he had strengthened him, and while others might oppose him, they would not be able to conquer him because GOD was with them. But as a child, his words were dismissed. And as a child, he soon forgot this.

CHAPTER 2

---

[532] This was in *Another Perfect Stranger*, and I realized that it was likely I had scrubbed it from the text in my eagerness to abridge for length.
[533] Some of this was specific to a film called *Jeremiah*, but The Book of Kings relates how a "law of Moses" was discovered in the temple during the reign of king Josiah. This dates it at his childhood, so yes this tracks.
[534] This doesn't in this case mean Jeremiah heard GOD speak to him, though he did. I means JESUS came to him in some form, probably as a child, considering his age.
[535] This visions are often plays on words or analogies. The almond tree is quick to bloom, likewise GOD is swift to act.

Now the LORD came to Jeremiah again when he was older. And Babylon had a new king named Nebuchadnezzar with dreams of expansion. At this point, he was old enough to marry and he was old enough to sacrifice as a priest, but he had a larger calling. And he said to Jeremiah to repeat to Israel, "I remember her[536] devotion in her youth, the love of her wedding to me, and how she pursued me in the wilderness in a land that was not sown. Israel was holiness to the LORD, they were his first fruits. Those who took her were accused. Those who violated her would have vengeance visited upon them. What fault then has she found in me, that now her people leave me and walk in vanity? Neither at the time did they say, 'Where is the LORD who brought us up out of the land of Egypt, who led us through the wilderness, through a land of deserts and of pits, through a land of drought and of the shadow of death, through a land that none passed through, and where no man lived?' I brought these people into a plentiful land, to eat its fruit and its goodness; but they defiled my land, and made my heritage an abomination. Nor at the time did the priests say, 'Where is the LORD?' But now those who handle the law do not know me. The rulers also transgressed against me, and the prophets prophesied by Baal, and walked after things that do not profit." And GOD said, "Therefore I will fight against Israel, and with her children. And I will look from all its corners and ponder this how this can be. Has a nation changed its gods, which really are no gods? But my people have changed their glory for that which does not profit. Be astonished, Heaven, at this, and be horribly afraid. Be very desolate. For my people have committed two evils: they have forsaken me, the spring of living waters, and cut them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water." And GOD told Jeremiah to ask the people if Israel was a servant or prey for a lion. For he said that the land of Israel was becoming a waste, and that its cities were burning up. GOD also said that Israel's own wickedness would correct it, for as they have forsaken the LORD all they chase after would condemn them.[537]

And GOD, the LORD of hosts, continued, "For of old time I have broken her yoke, and burst her bonds, and Israel said, 'I will not serve;' for on every high hill and under every green tree she bowed herself, playing the prostitute. Yet I had planted her a noble vine, wholly a right seed. How then have she turned into the degenerate branches of a foreign vine to me? For though she washed herself with lye, and used much soap, yet her iniquity is marked before me."[538] And GOD told Jeremiah to say to those who denied that they had done any wrong, "How can she say, 'I am not defiled. I have not gone after Baal'? Know what she has done. She is like a wild donkey used to the wilderness, that snuffs up the wind in her desire. All those who seek her will not weary themselves. In her month, they will find her. Withhold her foot from being unshod, and her throat from thirst." And to others of Israel, "But they said, 'It is in vain. No, for I have loved strangers, and I will go after them,'" for they were too ashamed to come to GOD, "As the thief is ashamed when they are found, so is the house of Israel ashamed. They tell wood, 'You are my father;' and a stone, 'You have brought me out of Egypt.' For they have turned their back to me. In the time of their trouble they will say to these things, 'Arise, and save us.' All of Israel have transgressed against me. But where are her gods that she has made for herself? Let them arise, if they can save her in the time of her trouble."

Then the LORD said to Jeremiah, "If a man puts away his wife, and she goes from him, and become another man's, will he return to her again? But she has played the prostitute with many lovers. Lift up your eyes to the bare heights, Israel, and see. Where have you not been lain with? You have sat for them by the ways, as an Arabian in the wilderness. You have polluted the land with your prostitution and with your wickedness. Therefore the showers have been withheld, and there has been no latter rain; yet you have a prostitute's forehead, you refused to be ashamed. Will Israel not from this time cry to me, 'My Father, you are the guide of my youth? Will he retain his anger forever? Will he keep it to the end?' She has spoken and done evil things, and she has had her way." And indeed, a drought would come to the land.

---

[536] I will be using she for Israel and they for Israel. Israel is described as a woman who became a prostitute, while Israel's people are a collective they. Confusing pronouns...

[537] When you abuse drink, you die of alcohol poisoning. When you abuse games of chance, you are in debt. When you abuse sex, you get STDs. In the same way, all things worshiped that are not GOD tend to hurt you, because you place your trust in them and thus have no restraint.

[538] Lye is made from burning materials and soaking the ashes in water. In the same way, ceremonies of cleansing require water and burnt offerings. The connection is made between scrubbing oneself clean, and making sacrifices as part of worship to be clean.

The LORD said also to Jeremiah, "Have you seen that which backsliding Israel has done? She has gone up on every high mountain and under every green tree, and there has played the prostitute. I said after she had done all these things, 'She will return to me;' but she did not return; and her sister Judah saw it. She saw that for all the causes for which faithless Israel had committed adultery, I had put her away and given her a bill of divorce, yet Judah, her sister, did not fear; but she also went and played the prostitute. And it came to pass, through her casual prostitution, that the land was polluted, and she committed adultery with stone and wood. Yet for all this her sister, Judah, has not returned to me with her whole heart, but only in pretense."[539]
The LORD told him to say to Israel, "Return, you backsliding Israel, I will not look in anger on you; for I am merciful. I will not keep anger forever. Only acknowledge your iniquity, that you have transgressed against the LORD your GOD, and have scattered your ways to the strangers under every green tree, and you have not obeyed my voice. Return, backsliding children, for I am a husband to you. I will take you one of a city, and two of a family, and I will bring you to Zion. It will come to pass, when you are multiplied and increased in the land, in those days they will speak no more about the ark of the covenant of the LORD, neither will it come to mind. They will not remember it; neither will they miss it, neither will it be made any more. At that time they will call Jerusalem the throne of the LORD and all the nations will be gathered to it. They will gather to the name of the LORD, to Jerusalem. Neither will they walk any more after the stubbornness of their evil heart. In those days the house of Judah will walk with the house of Israel, and they will come together as one people." And GOD promised that he would give Israel among the children, grant her a pleasant land, and he people would call him "My Father," and will no longer turn from following. They would cease their perversions and their unfaithfulness and they would say, "We have come to you; for you are the LORD our GOD. Truly the salvation of Israel is in the LORD our GOD. But the shameful thing has devoured the labor of our fathers from our youth, their flocks and their herds, their sons and their daughters. Let us lie down in our shame, and let our confusion cover us. For we have sinned against the LORD our GOD, from our youth. We have not obeyed the voice of the LORD our GOD." GOD promised if they would return, he would put away all their misdeeds, and spare them coming wrath. And Israel and Judah will be blessed, because his glory will be with them.
And GOD instructed them to break up their fallow land and not sow among thorns, to circumcise themselves to the LORD in their heart, so that the LORD will turn from his wrath. They are to blow a trumpet and assemble themselves as a standard for Zion. They must flee from their ways for safety, for the wrath from the north was coming. They were to put on sackcloth and wail in lamentation, for the king and official will perish, and the priests and prophets would be in awe.
And GOD described these times of upheaval as such to Jeremiah, "I saw Earth, and, it was waste and desolation; and Heaven, and they had no light. I saw the mountains, and they trembled, and all the hills moved back and forth. I saw, and there was no man, and all the birds of the sky had fled. I saw, and the fruitful field was a wilderness, and all its cities were broken down at the presence of the LORD, before his fierce anger they were destroyed. The whole land will be a desolation; yet I will not make a full end. For this Earth will mourn, and Heaven above be black. I have spoken it, I have purposed it, and I have not relented, neither will I turn back from it." He describes to Jeremiah how Israel wears fine clothes of scarlet,[540] dresses herself in ornaments of gold,[541] but her lovers despise her and seek her life.[542] At last, Zion will be like a woman in anguish who gasps for breath, saying, "Woe is me, for my spirit faints before the murderers." And the people of foreign lands would consume her harvests, destroy her herds, smash her cities, and lay her land to ruin. All of this would happen because Israel

---

[539] There was a whole deal where Judah is repeatedly called treacherous, and then they say that "backsliding Israel has proved more faithful than treacherous Judah." Ummm, no, no it hasn't. That's the Bible's bias towards Israel. In GOD's eyes though, he would prefer Israel given to its enemies over being divided, as Solomon mentioned with the baby who was going to be cut in half.
[540] Fine clothing implying hypocrisy.
[541] The temples of Israel are frequently adorned with gold, from gold seraphim to gold trimmings. This decorations of her clothing are the same shallow trappings as building a large church while the people are grossly impoverished. More importantly, this sort of debt allows one's enemies to take power over their country.
[542] You see this in modern days, where some Jews collude with globalists rather than trusting in GOD, and are destroyed by their corruption.

would not repent.
But the LORD promised that even then, he would not put an end to the people of Israel, for they are chosen by him. Even so, Israel was not only in rebellion, but her kings and prophets had turned away from GOD, and her prophets were telling false predictions of peace.[543]
The LORD warned them to flee, for evil is coming from the north. He tells them to signal others, for Zion will be cut off. They will make war against her, cut her trees down, and destroy her palaces. And Israel's enemies will come to Jerusalem itself and make violence against her. So said the LORD of hosts, "They will thoroughly glean the remnant of Israel like a vine. Pass your hand again as a grape gatherer into the baskets." And like the grapes that fall off the baskets, the words of the LORD fell away without being heard. They reproached the word of GOD and took no delight in it, and all of them were false before the LORD. The prophets would say "Peace, peace," when there is no peace. And as for the people they had no shame when they did all sorts of corrupt actions.
And Jeremiah tried not to share these words, for he did not want to be an outcast. He wished to be be a priest, and take a wife (the woman he loved was named Judith[544]), for his heart wanted nothing more than to live quietly.[545] But the *Ruach ha Kodesh* came upon him and overshadowed him while he stood in front of an animal to sacrifice, and he found that all of the words the LORD had told him to say spilling out of his mouth. And Jeremiah only had control of his body again when he stopped fighting the LORD. And he dropped the knife before making a sacrifice.
The LORD said through Jeremiah, "Like these sheep, your people grow fat and sleek, you know no bounds in deeds of wickedness. You judge unjustly and lead the unrighteous to prosper, and your do not defend the rights of the needy, and innocent blood is on your hands. So I say to you, your burnt offerings are not acceptable, nor your sacrifices pleasing to me," and the LORD pledged to give them a stumbling block.[546] Jeremiah stood at the gate of the temple and told them, "Thus says the LORD of hosts, the GOD of Israel: mend your ways and your doings, and I will cause you to dwell in this place. Do not trust in lying words, saying, ' This is the LORD's temple, the LORD's temple, the LORD's temple.' For the LORD dwells here only by his favor. If you thoroughly amend your ways and your doings; if you thoroughly execute justice between a man and his neighbor, and if you do not oppress the foreigner, the fatherless, and the widow, and do not shed innocent blood in this place, neither walk after other gods to your own hurt, then I will cause you to dwell in this place, in the land that I gave to your fathers, from of old even forevermore. But instead you trust in those lying words. Will you continue to steal, murder, and commit adultery? Will you continue to swear falsely? You think you make this sacrifice to GOD, but his blood does not atone for your sins! You may as well be offering to Baal, for your heart is about sacrifice and not mercy. You walk after other gods without knowing. And you dare come to stand before me in this house and say, 'We are delivered' while an innocent lamb dies for your sins?!? This is the LORD's temple, but you have turned it into a den of thieves![547] And the LORD says that he will cast you out of this temple, and cast you out of the city, and you will call to the LORD but he will not listen for you had no mercy."
Jeremiah warned them again that people from the north were coming for them, and this time, they were bringing their bows and their spears. They would strike first, they would strike hard, and they would show no mercy.[548]
The LORD spoke through Jeremiah, and asked Israel herself to clothe in sackcloth and mourn as if for a lost son, for indeed the day might come for just such a thing. He would put them to the test as one tests metals, as bronze and iron, he would melt them with hot bellows. He told them to cut off their

---

[543] One of the things that I worry about is that by rejecting Revelation and the idea of end times, that I am like these prophets that told the kings what they wanted to hear. So my position is that there are in fact areas of concern, but GOD is in control, and GOD is merciful and just. A gospel that says he will not forgive is not true Gospel, just as Gospel that says we do not sin is not true Gospel. Homosexuality or drunkeness or rape are all sins, but GOD can also forgive them.
[544] Judith is mentioned in her own apocryphal story. She would be a contemporary of Jeremiah though whether they actually met is unclear.
[545] Adding this in because the Book of Jeremiah is a series of long pronouncements of doom. Jeremiah was in fact a human being, and probably had desires and ambitions.
[546] A "scandal." This term has ties both to the chief cornerstone mentioned by Christ, but also to testimony against Israel, this why speaking about it enraged the Jews.
[547] Parallel here to JESUS driving out the money changers in the temple.
[548] What? Cobra Kai is an awesome show.

hair and throw it away, and take up a lamentation on the bare mountains, for the LORD would reject and forsake this generation in his wrath, "For the people of Judah have done that which is evil in my sight, and they have set their abominations in the house which is called by my name, to defile it. They have built the valley of GeHinnom[549] to burn their sons and their daughters in the fire. This will be called the Valley of Slaughter: for they will bury nearby, until there is no place to bury. The dead bodies of this people will be food for the birds of the sky, and for the animals of the land. Then will I cause the voice of the bridegroom and the bride and voices of mirth and gladness to cease from the cities of Judah, and from the streets of Jerusalem. For the land will become a waste." And he told these and a great many other parables of doom and destruction against the people of Israel. And they were greatly incensed, and drove him away from the temple and the city for a time, and they had no mercy to Jeremiah wherever he went.

CHAPTER 3

And Jeremiah wandered the land, when the LORD came to Jeremiah and told him, "Go and buy a linen belt and put it on your waist, and do not bring it near water," so he did so. Next, the LORD told him, "Take the belt that you have bought, which is on your waist, and arise, go to the Perath, and hide it there in a cleft of the rock."So he did so. After many days, he was instructed to return for the belt, and it was ruined. And the LORD said that so also would Israel be ruined.

Then he was instructed to go to Israel and tell them, "Every jar will be filled with wine."' And if they will said to him, "Do we not certainly know that every jar will be filled with wine?" then he was to say that the LORD said, "I will fill all the inhabitants of this land, even the kings who sit on David's throne, and the priests, and the prophets, and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, with drunkenness. I will dash them one against another, even the fathers and the sons together, says the LORD. I will not pity, nor spare, nor have compassion, that I should not destroy them." And Jeremiah told them to listen and not be proud for the LORD has spoken. They were to give glory GOD, before he causes darkness, and makes their feet stumble on the dark mountains, and while they look for light, he turns it into the shadow of death. But if they did not hear it, Jeremiah would weep for them, because the LORD's flock would be taken captive. He likewise told the king and queen that their crown would soon fall off, and was banished again for these words.

And after this, a great drought came upon the land. And the LORD came to speak to Jeremiah about this drought, condemning it for their sins. And after Jeremiah had said the words that GOD had commanded him, the people cried out to GOD, "Have you utterly rejected Judah? Has your soul loathed Zion? Why have you struck us, and there is no healing for us? We looked for peace, but no good came; and for a time of healing, and dismay. We acknowledge, LORD, our wickedness, and the iniquity of our fathers, for we have sinned against you. Do not abhor us, for your name's sake; do not disgrace the throne of your glory: remember, do not break your covenant with us. Are there any among the vanities of the nations that can cause rain? Or can the sky give showers? Isn't this the LORD our GOD? Therefore we will wait for you; for you have made all these things." For a time, GOD did forgive them, and the drought halted. But once it rained, they quickly forgot their words, and returned to their sins.

CHAPTER 4

The LORD showed Jeremiah two baskets of figs set before the LORD's temple. One basket had very good figs, like the figs that are first-ripe; and the other basket had very bad figs, which could not be eaten, they were so bad. Then the LORD said to Jeremiah, "What do you see, Jeremiah?" I said, "Figs; the good figs, very good; and the bad, very bad, that can't be eaten, they are so bad." The word of the LORD came to Jeremiah, saying, "Like these good figs, so will I regard the captives of Judah, who I have sent out of this place into the land of the Chaldeans[550], for good. For I will set my eyes on them for good, and I will bring them again to this land and I will build them, and not pull them down. And I will plant them, and not pluck them up. I will give them a heart to know me, that I am the LORD, and they will be my people, and I will be their GOD. They will return to me with their whole heart. As the bad figs, which can't be eaten, they are so bad, so will I give up Zedekiah, King of Judah, and his

[549] Gehenna, it is more commonly known as. The original text said Ben Hinnom, or the Valley of the Son of Hinnom.
[550] Babylonians are a subset of Chaldeans. So all Babylonians are Chaldeans, but not all Chaldeans are Babylonians.

officials, and the remnant of Jerusalem who remain in this land. I will make them a horror, an evil thing, to all the kingdoms of Earth. They will be a taunt and a curse, mocking them in all places where I will drive them. I will send the sword, the famine, and the pestilence, among them, until they be consumed from off the land that I gave to them and to their fathers."

CHAPTER 5

And the LORD told Jeremiah not to take a wife, nor have any sons or daughters, for the sons and daughters (and their mothers) would die in a horrible fashion, and they would not be buried but would be food for birds and wild animals. But GOD said not to mourn them, nor go into houses of feasting, for he will cause to end the voice of the bridegroom and the bride. And when the people asked him, " Why has the LORD pronounced all this great evil against us? Or what is our iniquity? Or what is our sin that we have committed against the LORD our GOD?" he was to tell them, " Because your fathers have forsaken me and have walked after other gods, have served them, have worshiped them, have forsaken me, and have not kept my law. And you have done evil more than your fathers, for you walk every one after the stubbornness of his evil heart, so that you do not listen to me. Therefore I will cast you forth out of this land into the land that you have not known, neither you nor your fathers. And there you will serve these other gods day and night, for I will show you no favor."

CHAPTER 6

And to Jeremiah came the LORD, telling him to go to the potter's house, and he was working on a vessel while spinning it on the wheel. And the potter fucked up, and the vessel fell apart, and he grabbed it and spun it again on the wheel. And the LORD said to Jeremiah, "Can I not do to Israel what this potter has done with the clay? As clay is in his hand, so all things are in my hand. I have come to break down and destroy it, and then build and renew it. If they continue to do evil, then I will once again undo what I have built, causing it again to fall to ruin. The people have forgotten me, and so I will scatter them."

And Jeremiah was told, "Buy this potter's vessel, and take with you some of the elders of the priests and the people, and go to the Valley of Slaughter through the Pot Shard Gate,[551] and proclaim that evil will come because of the sacrifice of children and innocents." And he said that the men of Israel would be caused to eat each other during the siege.[552] And Jeremiah broke apart the vessel that the potter had made, saying that just as it had broken, so also would the people of Israel fall to ruin.

CHAPTER 7

But Pashhur, the son of Immer the priest and chief officer of the house of the LORD, heard Jeremiah prophesying these things. And having caught them doing them, he beat Jeremiah and put him in the stocks. When Pashhur released him from the stocks, Jeremiah prophesied against him, "The LORD has not called your name 'Pashhur,' but 'Magor-Missabib.'[553] For the LORD says that he will make you a terror to yourself and to all your friends. And they will fall by the sword of their enemies. He will give Judah into the hand of the king of Babylon. He will carry them captive to Babylon, and will kill them with the sword. And all the riches of this city will go to the hand of her enemies. All who dwell in your house will go into captivity, and you will come to Babylon to be put to death, and so also will be everyone to who you have prophesied falsely.'"

Now Pashhur was asked by Maaseiah the priest and to Zedekiah the king to question Jeremiah, saying, "Please inquire of the LORD for us; for Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon makes war against us. Perhaps the LORD will deal with us according to all his wondrous works, that he may go up from us." But Jeremiah said to them to tell Zedekiah this, from the LORD, "I will turn back the weapons of war that are in your hands, with which you fight against the king of Babylon, and against the Chaldeans

---

[551] In Jerusalem, they had a number of gates: After the Exile, there was the Corner Gate (which was destroyed and was mentioned as being rebuilt in the Day of the LORD), Ephraim Gate, the Benjamin Gate, and the New Gate. But before the Exile, when this was dated, there were the *Sheep Gate* (aka Benjamin Gate), Fish Gate (Ephraim Gate), Old Gate, Valley Gate, Dung Gate, Fountain Gate, Water Gate, Horse Gate, East Gate (also known as the Temple Gate, where Ezekiel prophesied would be closed, and where JESUS probably rode through on a donkey), and Muster Gate. This would have been the Dung Gate.

[552] History tends to rhyme. Just as this is prophesied for the fall of the Solomon's rebuilt temple, it also happened during the fall of Herod's temple under Rome.

[553] Magor-Missabib means "terror all around." Pashhur is from uncertain origin (possibly Egyptian) meaning "son of Horus." Another interpretation is "splitter/cleaver."

who besiege you, without the walls, and I will gather them into the midst of this city. I myself will fight against you with great indignation. I will strike the inhabitants of this city, both man and animal, and they will die of a great pestilence. Afterward, I will deliver Zedekiah, King of Judah, and his servants, and the people that are left in this city from the pestilence, from the sword, and from the famine, into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon. They will go into the hand of their enemies, into the hand of those who seek their life, and he will strike them dead with the edge of the sword. He who remains in this city will die with no mercy. But he who goes out of the city to the Chaldeans who besiege you, he will live. For I have set my face on this city for evil and not for good. It will be given into the hand of the king of Babylon, and he will burn it with fire."
And Jeremiah saw that as he was making these speeches, the scribes were writing down his every word, but the LORD told him that they were writing false stories. So he said to them, "Woe to you, false scribes! For you say, 'We are wise, for we have the law of the LORD,' yet with lying pens like yours, a law has been written of the LORD that has handled it falsely. With a stroke of ink or a carving on a tablet you have set heavy burdens on people who cannot keep GOD's law, you have made riches and not mercy the standard for righteousness. For you scribes have time to worship but the common people do not, for their lives are filled with worry. So I tell you, as you write lies about me, also write this:

> *The wise will be put to shame, they will be dismayed and trapped. Since they have rejected the word of the LORD, what kind of wisdom do they have? From the least to the greatest, all are greedy for gain, scribes and priests alike, all practice deceit. They dress the wound of my people poorly, and they say "Peace, peace," when there is no peace. Therefore I will give their wives to other men and their fields to new owners.*

So let it be to scribes that do not have mercy upon others."
Now Zedekiah was twenty-one years old when he began to reign; and he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem. He did much which was evil in the sight of the LORD. And worse still than his own evil was his weakness, for he allowed false prophets and priests of false gods to mislead him.
Thus spoke the priests and the scribes to the officials and to all the people, saying, "This man is worthy of death; for he has prophesied against this city, as you have heard with your ears." Then Jeremiah spoke to all the officials and to all the people, saying, "The LORD sent me to prophesy against this house and against this city all the words that you have heard. Now therefore amend your ways and your doings, and obey the voice of the LORD your GOD; and the LORD will relent of the disaster that he has pronounced against you. But as for me, I am in your hands. Do with me as is good and right in your eyes. Only know for certain that, if you put me to death, you will bring innocent blood on yourselves, and on this city, and on its inhabitants. For the LORD has sent me to you to speak all these words in truth to your ears." At these words, the officials and all the people said to the priests and to the scribes: "This man is not worthy of death; for he has spoken to us in the name of the LORD our GOD." And thus Jeremiah's life was spared.

CHAPTER 8

Jeremiah received word again from the LORD, saying, "Make bonds and bars, and put them on your neck, and send them to the kings of Edom, Moab, Ammon, Tyre, and Sidon, by the hand of the messengers who come to Jerusalem to Zedekiah. Tell them to tell their masters that the LORD of hosts, the GOD of Israel says to them," and Jeremiah spoke the LORD's words to them, "I have made Earth, the men, and the animals that are on the surface of Earth by my great power and by my outstretched arm. I give it to who it seems right to me. Now have I given all these lands into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon; and the animals of the field also have I given him to serve him. All the nations will serve him, and his son, and his son's son, until the time of his own land come. And after that, many nations and great kings will make Babylon their bondservant. When the nation and the kingdom which will not serve the same Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon and will not live under the yoke of the king of Babylon, I will punish that nation, until I have consumed them."
The LORD then told Jeremiah a message for Israel, and Jeremiah spoke to Zedekiah, King of Judah according to all these words, "But as for you, do not listen to your prophets, nor to your diviners, nor to your dreams, nor to your soothsayers, nor to your spiritualists, who speak to you, saying, 'You will not serve the king of Babylon' for they prophesy a lie to you. Bring your necks under the yoke of the

king of Babylon, and serve him and his people, and live. Why should you die, you and your people, by the sword, by the famine, and by the pestilence, as the LORD has already spoken concerning the nation?"
Jeremiah also spoke to the priests and to all this people, saying, "Do not listen to the words of your prophets who prophesy to you, saying, 'The vessels of the LORD's house will now shortly be brought again from Babylon,' for they prophesy a lie to you. Serve the king of Babylon, and live. Why should this city become a desolation? But if they be prophets, and if the word of the LORD be with them, let them now make intercession to the LORD of hosts, that the vessels which are left in the house of the LORD, and in the house of the king of Judah, and at Jerusalem, do not go to Babylon."
In the same year, Hananiah the son of Azzur, the prophet, who was of Gibeon, spoke to Jeremiah in the house of the LORD, in the presence of the priests and of all the people, saying, "Thus speaks the LORD of hosts, the GOD of Israel, 'I have broken the yoke of the king of Babylon. Within two full years will I bring again into this place all the vessels of the LORD's house and I will bring again to this place Jeconiah, King of Judah, with all the captives of Judah, who went to Babylon.'" So said the prophet Hananiah, "LORD do so. For the LORD perform your words which you have prophesied, to bring back the vessels of the LORD's house, and all the people of the captivity, from Babylon to this place. The prophets who have been before me prophesied against many countries, and against great kingdoms, of war, and of evil, and of pestilence. Now I, Hananiah, the prophet here today prophesies of peace, so that when these words will happen, then will it be known that the LORD has truly sent me." Then Hananiah the prophet took the bar from off the prophet Jeremiah's neck, and broke it. Hananiah spoke in the presence of all the people, saying, "Thus says the LORD: 'Even so will I break the yoke of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon within two full years from off the neck of all the nations.'"[554]
Then the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah, telling Hananiah, "You have broken the bars of wood, but you have made in their place bars of iron. I have put a yoke of iron on the neck of all these nations, that they may serve Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon. And they will serve him, and I have given him the animals of the field also. Hear now, Hananiah: the LORD has not sent you, but you make this people to trust in a lie. I will send you away from off the surface of Earth. This year you will die, because you have spoken rebellion against the LORD.'" So Hananiah the prophet died that same year.

CHAPTER 9

Zedekiah the son of Josiah reigned as king, instead of Coniah, who Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon had accepted king in the land of Judah.[555] And neither Zedekiah nor his servants listened to to the words of the LORD spoken by the prophet Jeremiah. Zedekiah sent messengers to Jeremiah asking him, "Pray now to the LORD our GOD for us."
At this time, Jeremiah traveled freely among the people, because they had not imprisoned him. Yet. Now Pharaoh's army came from Egypt, and fought the Chaldeans who had been bothering Israel. At this time, the LORD said to Jeremiah, "The army of Pharaoh, which has come forth to help Israel, will return to Egypt into their own land. The Chaldeans will come again, and fight against this city, and burn it with fire. Therefore, you must tell Zedekiah and the other people of Israel, do not deceive yourselves with predictions of their departure, for they will not depart." But when the army of the Chaldeans fled from Jerusalem because of Pharaoh's army, Jeremiah headed out toward the land of Benjamin.[556] When he passed the Benjamin Gate, the captain grabbed him, accusing, "You are running away to betray us to the Chaldeans!" For Jeremiah was forever talking about how if they surrendered to their enemies, the LORD would save them. But he denied this.
Yet the captain would not listen, beat him, and he imprisoned him. And they let Jeremiah down into a deep dungeon filled with mud. There was no water, nor food to eat, but plenty of muck. And Jeremiah remained in that prison for many days. Now Ebedmelech the Ethiopian, one of the eunuchs in the king's house, had heard that they had put Jeremiah in the dungeon, so he went to the king, and told him, "My king, these men have done evil in all that they have done to Jeremiah the prophet, who they have cast into the dungeon; and he is likely to die in the place where he is, for there

[554] Basically, warring prophets, with GOD deciding which one is true or not.
[555] In other words, Zedekiah might have been a usurper to the throne.
[556] It looks here like he's doing a Jonah impression. Being a prophet for GOD can have that effect on people.

is no bread for him. And I fear if the LORD's prophet dies, our land is doomed." So Zedekiah the king met him secretly in prison,[557] and he asked Jeremiah, "Is there any word from the LORD?"
Jeremiah said, "There is." He said, "You will be delivered into the hand of the king of Babylon." And has asked Zedekiah, "How have I sinned against you or the people that I am now imprisoned? Let my petition be presented to you, rather than Jonathan the scribe, who seeks my death." And Zedekiah commanded that Jeremiah be fed a daily loaf of bread, and he did not die in prison.

CHAPTER 10

And Zedekiah continued to visit Jeremiah, saying to him, "I will ask you something. Hide nothing from me." But Jeremiah said, "If I declare it to you, will you not surely put me to death? And if I give you counsel, you will not listen to me." So Zedekiah the king swore secretly to Jeremiah, saying, "As the LORD lives, I swear up this soul he has made, I will not put you to death, neither will I give you into the hand of these men who seek your life."
So Jeremiah told him again that if he went to the king of Babylon's officers, the LORD would spare the city and him, but if he did not go, the land would be burned by fire at the hand of the Chaldeans, and they would not escape. And this time, Zedekiah listened. But he was deeply afraid. He said, "I am in fear of the Hebrew people. What will they do to me if I do as you propose?" But Jeremiah told him to have no fear, for the LORD would spare him. Then Zedekiah said to Jeremiah, "Let no man know of these words, and you will not die. But if the officials hear that I have talked with you, and they come to you, and tell you, 'Declare to us now what you have said to the king,' then you will tell them, 'I presented my petition before the king, that he protect me from those who would kill me.'"
After this, the king said to his servants, "Take from here thirty men with you, and take up Jeremiah the prophet out of the dungeon, before he dies." So Ebedmelech the eunuch took the men with him, and took rags and worn-out garments, and let them down by rope into the dungeon to Jeremiah. Ebedmelech the Ethiopian said to Jeremiah, "Put now these rags and worn-out garments under your armpits under the rope." Jeremiah did so. So they drew up Jeremiah with the ropes, and took him up out of the dungeon to the court of the guard, and Jeremiah remained there in safety in the court of the guard until the day that Jerusalem was taken.

CHAPTER 11

Now while he was in the court of the guard, Jeremiah came to Zedekiah with the word of the LORD, saying, that Jerusalem was doomed. And he began to tell of what would befall Israel and Judah, saying, "Woe to him who builds his palace by unrighteousness, his upper rooms by injustice, making his own people work for nothing, not paying them for their labor." And after this, Zedekiah made a covenant, promising that every servant, male and female be set free, and none of them hold servants any more. And the LORD was prepared to turn from his wrath.
But the king was weak, and did not exert his authority. So later on, they turned from their ways, and brought these freed servants and handmaids back into subjection. So the LORD came to Jeremiah, and Jeremiah told the king his words, "I made a covenant with your fathers in the day that I brought them forth out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage, saying, 'At the end of seven years you will let go every man his brother who is a Hebrew, who has been sold to you, and has served you six years, you will let him go free from you,' but your fathers did not listen to me. And now you also have repented and done what is right in my eyes, setting free all the servants and handmaids, but now again you put them into bondage. You have not listened to my covenant to proclaim liberty, so now I proclaim liberty for your souls from their bodies: to the sword, to the pestilence, and to the famine. I will give those who transgressed my covenant in to the hands of their enemies. I will give them into slavery, into those who who seek their lives. And when they die, their bodies are for the birds of the air and the animals of the land."
Then Jeremiah spoke to all the people,[558] saying, "He who remains in this city will die by the sword, by the famine, and by the pestilence. But he who goes forth to the Chaldeans will live, and his life will be to him for a prey, and he will live. This city will surely be given into the hand of the army of the king

[557] Originially, he brings him out of prison, but there are sequential problems with this due to the out of order nature of Jeremiah. I also merged two incidents of imprisonment into one long episode, so it has a lot of details mixed together.
[558] This is something the LORD said. But by now, Jeremiah would have it memorized.

of Babylon, and he will take it." But the officials said to the king, "Please let this man be put to death; because he weakens the hands of the men of war who remain in this city in speaking such words to them. This man doesn't care for the welfare of this people, but wishes them harm." Yet Zedekiah spared Jeremiah's life.

CHAPTER 12

It happened when Jerusalem was taken, in the ninth year of Zedekiah's reign, in the tenth day of the tenth month Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon and all his army against Jerusalem came, and besieged it. It was beseiged until the eleventh year of Zedekiah, in the ninth day of the fourth month, when a breach was made in the walls of the side. This same month, a famine hit the land, and there was no bread for the people. So when the wall was breached, many men fled the city. But as for the king and those loyal to the city, the Chaldeans pursued, and Zedekiah was surrounded at the plains of Jericho, and the king of Babylon killed the sons of Zedekiah while he watched. And it was the last thing he saw, for they gouged out his eyes, then bound him in chains until the day he died.

In the tenth day of the fifth month, the captain of the guard of Nebuchadnezzar entered the city and burned the houses of the people with fire and broke down the walls of Jerusalem. He also burned down the house of the LORD and the king's house. And the army of the Chaldeans took the people into captivity who remained in the city.[559]

They also broke the pillars of bronze in the house of the LORD, and the vessels that were in the house of the LORD in pieces, and carried all their bronze to Babylon.[560] They took their pots, spoons, basins, and other objects of bronze. Likewise, of their gold, they took cups, bowls, lampstands, and so on. And so also in silver. And they took everything of value from the temple, and also took members of the priesthood. And the king of Babylon beat them, and put them to death.[561]

But the poor of the land, the captain of the guard left to be farmers and vineyard keepers. So it was that some remained in Israel while others were exiled.[562] And the captain of the guard came to Jeremiah, and Nebuchadnezzar instructed the captain, "Do this man no harm. For the LORD, the GOD of Israel has given this city to us, and this man prophesied against his own land. Whatever he asks, let him have." So Jeremiah was released from the court, and he went to his home, and he lived among the remaining people of Israel. And Jeremiah also told the word of the LORD to Ebedmelech the Ethiopian, as it had been said to him, "I will bring my words on this city for disaster, and not for prosperity, and they will be fulfilled before you. But I will deliver you, and you will not be given into the hand of the men of who you are afraid. For I will surely save you, and you will not fall by the sword, but your life will be given to you as a reward, because you have put your trust in me." And so he remained there too.

Following this, the LORD told Jeremiah, "Just as I have brought all this great disaster on this people, so will I bring on them all the good that I have promised them. Fields will be bought in this land, about which you say, 'It is desolate, without man or animal; it is given into the hand of the Chaldeans.' Men will buy fields for money, and subscribe the deeds, and seal them, and call witnesses, in the land of Benjamin, and in the places about Jerusalem, and in the cities of Judah, and in the cities of the hill country, and in the cities of the lowland, and in the cities of the Negev. But as they turn to evil again, I will cause their captivity to return."

CHAPTER 13

And Jeremiah spoke the word of the LORD to the people as they were taken into captivity, "I have caused to be carried away captive from Jerusalem to Babylon, and now I tell you, build houses, and dwell in them. Plant gardens, and eat their fruit. Take wives, and father sons and daughters, and take wives for your sons and give your daughters to husbands, that they may bear sons and daughters. For they will multiply there, and not be diminished. Seek the peace of the city where I have caused you to

---

[559] The original text says also the deserters were taken captive, but in an effort to make Jeremiah's prophecies consistent, I only included those who stayed.

[560] This is later important in Daniel.

[561] This raiding of the temple reminds me of how on Maundy Thursday, the church is stripped of all adornment in memory of the arrest of JESUS.

[562] The Jewish people sometimes do a No True Scotsman fallacy, where the Jews who were not part of the exile are considered not true Jews. But if anything, they were not among those GOD considered worthy of exile.

be carried away captive, and pray to the LORD for it, for in its peace you will have peace. Seventy years will pass, then I will visit you that you will be freed from exile and captivity. I have plans for you, for your welfare and not for calamity, to give you a hope and a future. You will call on me, and you will go and pray to me, and I will listen to you. You will seek me, and find me, when you will search for me with all your heart. I will be found by you."
And the LORD also prophesied against Babylon through Jeremiah, saying, "I will raise up against Babylon, a destroying wind. I will send to Babylon foreigners who will winnow her, and they will empty her land, for in the day of trouble they will be against her. They will fall down slain in the land of the Chaldeans. For Israel is not forsaken, nor Judah, of the LORD of hosts, even though their land is full of guilt against the Holy One of Israel. Babylon has been like a golden cup in the LORD's hand, for the nations have drunk of her wine and have gone mad. And so the people of Babylon will say, 'Babylon is suddenly fallen and destroyed. We would have healed Babylon, but she is not healed. Forsake her, and let us go everyone into his own country. For her judgement reaches even up to Heaven.' But you will say, 'The LORD has brought forth our righteousness. Come, and let us declare in Zion the work of the LORD our GOD.' For the LORD has stirred up the spirit of the kings of the Medes, because his purpose is against Babylon, in order to destroy it. This is the vengeance of the LORD, the vengeance of his temple. Set up a standard against the walls of Babylon, and make the watch strong. Go set a watchmen,[563] for the LORD has done that which he spoke concerning the inhabitants of Babylon. You who dwell on many waters,[564] your end is coming. He has made Earth by his power, he has established the world by his wisdom, and by his understanding has he stretched out Heaven. In the time of his visitation, they will perish. The portion of Jacob is not like these, for he is the maker of all things. Israel is the tribe of his inheritance, and the LORD of hosts is his name. You are my battle axe and weapons of war, with you will I break in pieces the nations and destroy kingdoms. I will render to Babylon all their evil that they do in Zion in your sight."
Jeremiah wrote in a scroll all the evil that should come on Babylon, even all these words that are written concerning Babylon.
Jeremiah said to those in captivity, "When you come to Babylon, then see that you read all these words, and say, 'LORD, you have spoken concerning this place, to cut it off, that none will dwell in it, neither man nor animal, but that it will be desolate forever.' It will be, when you have made an end of reading this scroll, that you will bind a stone to it, and cast it into the midst of the Perath. And you will say, 'Thus will Babylon sink, and will not rise again because of the evil that I will bring on her; and they will be weary.'"
Thus far are the words of Jeremiah.

DANIEL

CHAPTER 1

Israel was sent into exile by GOD through the hand of Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon. Jerusalem was sacked, and gold vessels were taken out of its temple. And many of its people were taken to Babylon, including Daniel and his friends Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah. The king told Ashpenaz (the master of his eunuchs) that he wanted some of the people of Israel, even including the royal family, that they be taught and advise as scholars. The master of the eunuchs gave names to them: to Daniel he gave the name of Belthasar; Hananiah he named Shadrach; Mishael was named Meshach; and Azariah was called Abednego. This was to strip them of their old lives and identities. And the king gave them a daily portion of royal food, of the choicest meat and wine. But Daniel decided that this food was unclean and that he would not defile himself with food given in honor of pagan gods. He was a Hebrew, and Hebrews ought to eat kosher. But Daniel lacked fields to grow his own food. And he asked the master of the eunuchs for help.
And GOD gave Daniel compassion in the sight of the prince of the eunuchs. But he worried for his own head, "What will happen to me if the king sees your faces looking starved?" So Daniel made a bet of sorts, "Give us fruits and vegetables with water to drink, and if after ten days we look worse than

[563] The title of a Harper Lee novel comes from this.
[564] Mesopotamia (Babylon) is the land between the waters.

your servants, we will eat." And so he tested them. And GOD sustained them those ten days, even though such a meal is un-American, and vegans are obviously not healthy.[565] And while they ate, GOD blessed them in their knowledge and skill, and Daniel received gifts of understanding in visions and dreams. And when at the end of the ten days they were presented, the king found they looked ten times better than the other servants in his realm. After this, Daniel and his friends ate as they pleased.

CHAPTER 2

Now Nebuchadnezzar had troubles of his own. He had a disturbing dream, night after night. And he wondered after it. He wanted to ask his magicians, enchanters, and mystics but he worried they would tell him what he wanted to hear. So he reasoned, if these experts really know their business they will tell me both my dream and what it means. The king pronounced, "I will bring to my chambers all manner of wise people, and if they cannot tell me my dream and what it means, they will be cut in pieces by my guards, and their houses will be disgraced." And he carried this out, cutting apart so-called wise men, one after another.

And Daniel was summoned to his chambers. And Daniel asked, "Let the king appoint me some time, and I will interpret your dream." And Daniel prayed to GOD until he fell asleep. That night, Daniel saw Nebuchadnezzar's dream, and gave him the means to interpret it. And Daniel thanked and blessed the LORD, saying, ""Blessed be the name of GOD forever and ever; for wisdom and might are his. He changes the times and the seasons; he removes kings, and sets up kings; he gives wisdom to the wise, and knowledge to those who have understanding, he reveals the deep and secret things; he knows what is in the darkness, and the light dwells with him. I thank you, and praise you, GOD of my fathers, who has given me wisdom and might, and has now made known to me what we desired of you. For you have made known to us the king's matter." And he returned before the king. Daniel said, "Destroy no more wise men of Babylon, for I know your dream, and what it means." And the king Nebuchadnezzar asked how it was that he could have succeeded where these men failed. Daniel told him, "Although the matter has been hidden from soothsayers, augurers, and other experts, there is a GOD in Israel who reveals things unknown. Your dream, majesty, is this: you have seen a mighty statue, the head of which is gold, the breastplate and arms are silver, the lower torso of bronze, the legs are of iron, and the feet are of iron mixed with clay. And then you saw a large block of stone[566] that was cut without human hands which stuck the statue. And the ruins of the statue were carried away, but the stone which struck the statue became a great mountain which covered the whole world."

Nebuchadnezzar nodded, "But what does it mean?" And Daniel explained, "Your empire will be like gold to who the GOD of Heaven has given, and those after it will be pale imitations of silver and bronze. In the future, will come a strong kingdom of iron, which breaks and crushes all things, and after it will come a kingdom that appears strong yet is divided, as clay is divided with the iron. Then the GOD of Heaven will set up a kingdom which will never be destroyed, nor will its sovereignty be left to another people; but it will break in pieces and consume all those kingdoms, and it will stand forever."[567]

The king answered Daniel and said, "Surely your GOD is the GOD of gods, and the LORD of kings, and a revealer of secrets, seeing you have been able to reveal this secret." And through Nebuchadnezzar, GOD made Daniel and his friends Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego great by appointing them over the affairs of Babylon.

CHAPTER 3

But Nebuchadnezzar gradually went astray, seeking for his kingdom to be like gold, apparently everlasting. And he built an enormous statue in his own image. And he sent all his officials to honor

---

[565] Sorry, just thought I'd insert some funny editorial here. A vegetarian diet is low in fat, but a vegan diet does lack certain amino acids. Most of this is fine though, provided the diet includes milk and other dairy. In any case, the diet that Babylon had in store probably was pretty unhealthy, so it's a matter of circumstance.

[566] A "stumbling block" as JESUS puts it. In other words, contrary to end-times notions, JESUS is the event that brings in GOD's Kingdom, the world just cannot see it.

[567] Most interpretations place this as various eras or empires, such as Babylonian, Persian, Greek, Roman, and then they push it to modern era by making some comparison between America and Rome. Rather, we're describing Babylon, then Persian, then Greek, then Roman, and then the divided Roman Empire (Holy Roman Empire).

this depiction, and musicians to play in its honor. And he sent out a proclamation, "Whenever you hear the music played in honor of the kingdom of Babylon, you are to worship in praise of this golden image of me. Whoever doesn't fall down and worship will be thrown into the midst of a burning fiery furnace."
But Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were found and reported that when this music sounded, they did not worship as the others did.[568] And the king asked them, "Why do you not serve my god, nor worship the golden image which I have set up?" He prepared to play the music again, but the three said, "That is not necessary. We will never bow to such idols, for we serve the LORD. Take us into the fiery furnace. Our GOD who we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace; and he will deliver us out of your hand, if it is his will. If not, then let it be as you wish." Then Nebuchadnezzar was furious, and he ordered Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego to be bound and tossed into the furnace. He said, "Make the furnace seven times hotter than normal," and it was so hot that those who led them into the furnace were burned to death just from convection. And Daniel's three friends crouched down in the middle of the furnace. But the LORD was there with them, and they were not harmed.
Then Nebuchadnezzar noticed, "Weren't there only three men in this furnace?" His advisers and servants agreed. He asked, "How is it then, that I now see four men, and one of them has a face that shines as if a god?" Then Nebuchadnezzar called for them to be released. The furnace was shut off and the door was open, and the three were moved outside. And they had not one hair of their heads singed, nor were their clothes touched, nor was there even the smell of smoke on them.
Nebuchadnezzar spoke and said, "Blessed be the GOD of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who has changed the king's word, that they might not serve nor worship any god, except their own GOD. Therefore I make a decree, that every people, nation, and language, which speak anything evil against the GOD of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, will be cut in pieces, and their houses will be reduced to rubble; because there is no other god who is able to deliver in this way." And so he blessed their GOD.

CHAPTER 4

Nebuchadnezzar was troubled by another dream. And he asked the other wise men of Babylon, but once again they did not know. So he asked Daniel, saying, "Chief of the magicians, because I know that the spirit of the holy gods is in you, and no secret troubles you, tell me the visions of my dream that I have seen, and its interpretation. Thus were the visions of my head on my bed: I saw, and a tree in the midst of Earth and its height was great. The tree reached to the sky, and it could be seen anywhere on Earth. The animals of the field had shadow under it, and the birds of the sky lived in its branches, and all life was fed from its fruit. But then a holy one came and said, 'Cut down the tree, and cut off its branches, shake off its leaves, and scatter its fruit. Let the animals get away from under it, and the fowls from its branches. Nevertheless leave the stump of its roots in Earth, even with a band of iron and bronze, and let its portion be with the animals in the grass of Earth. Thus will it be know that the Most High rules in the kingdom of men, and gives it to anyone he wants, and sets up over it the lowliest of men.' Daniel, what does this dream mean?" And Daniel said, "You are a great king who supports many, like this tree. If you repent of your sins, and show mercy to the poor, your own prosperity will be lengthened. But if you do not do as is advised, you will be driven out in madness and eat grass like a wild oxen. But just as a stump is left, your kingdom will not be destroyed during your madness, and GOD will return all to you if you repent."
But he ignored Daniel's advice and trusted only in the kingdom of Babylon. A year later, he was walking in the royal palace of Babylon, and he said, "Is not this great Babylon, which I have built for the royal dwelling place, by the might of my power and for the glory of my majesty?" That very moment, as voice told him, "Whatever has been built by you is due to my inspiration. Behold, even your mind can be taken away." And the next moment, he was as dumb as a beast[569] and his royal clothes became dirty like rags, his nails grew long like the claws of an animal, and his hair grew long

[568] Apparently Daniel was out of town during this time, as he is not mentioned here. Possibly Nebuchadnezzar granted him leave to visit family, as he would likewise not have worshiped this statue, but no such punishment is mentioned.
[569] This is a pretty good picture of the senility and dementia that older leaders get. We must not trust in our own minds, as they can easily become addled.

and disheveled. And he indeed ate grass and slept outside as a madman. Finally, Nebuchadnezzar repented and his mind was restored to him. And he praised GOD with his whole being.

CHAPTER 5

Belshazzar was the son of Nebuchadnezzar, and unlike his father, he had no respect for GOD or for Daniel. And he feasted with thousands of his advisers and drank wine. And while drunk, he ordered gold and silver vessels that belonged to his father, that he might drink from him. These were the vessels raided from the temple in Jerusalem, the vessels used for Daniel's people in praising and worship of GOD. While they drank, they praised instead gods of gold, silver, iron, wood, and stone. And suddenly, the fingers of a hand began to write these words on the plaster of the palace:

מנא מנא תקל ופרסין

Belshazzar's face turned pale, and he begged anyone around who would interpret this to be clothed in purple and have a chain around his neck, and would be made a ruler in his kingdom. But none of them could. Then the previous queen under Nebuchadnezzar said, "There is a man in your kingdom, in who is the spirit of the holy gods; and in the days of your father light and understanding and wisdom, like the wisdom of the gods, were found in him; and king Nebuchadnezzar your father, your father the king, made him chief of the magicians, enchanters, Chaldeans, and diviners; because an extraordinary spirit, and knowledge, and understanding to interpret dreams, explain riddles, and solve problems were found in this Daniel. Let Daniel be called, and he will show the interpretation." And Belshazzar offered him these same gifts, but Daniel said, "Keep your gifts to yourself. I will read this text, and the LORD will give me its interpretation. The Most High GOD gave Nebuchadnezzar your father the kingdom, and greatness, and glory, and majesty. And all trembled before the majesty that he was given, for anyone he said would be killed or spared would thus be done. But he became arrogant, and he was removed from his throne and became like a wild animal, until he knew that the Most High GOD rules in the kingdom of men, and that he sets up over it whoever he wants. You saw this all, yet you are not humbled, and do not respect the LORD. And you have lifted yourself up, bringing vessels of his temple and drunk wine from it, and even praised the gods of gold, silver, and other materials over the GOD who gave you breath and life. Therefore, these are the words written, and you will know their meaning. *Mene, Mene, Tekel, Peres*. This is their meaning. *Mene,* for GOD has numbered your kingdom, and brought it to an end; *Tekel*, for you are weighed in the balances, and are found wanting; and *Peres*, your kingdom is divided, and given to the Medes and Persians."[570] Belshazzar gave him the gifts anyway, but that very night, he was killed. And Darius the Mede received the kingdom, being about sixty-two years old.

CHAPTER 6

Unlike Belshazzar before him, Darius was a just and righteous king. He followed the laws of the Medes and the Persians, and any law that was written and signed could not be undone. In this way, Darius could not abuse his power by undoing his own decisions. And Darius set up a kingdom of one hundred and twenty satraps, and three administrators, and gave Daniel authority as one of his administrators. And Daniel helped Darius rule wisely and justly, unlike Belshazzar before him.

But the other satraps and administrators were jealous, and tried to have some charge brought against him, but he was faithful to the king and without any apparent flaws. His only disloyalty was that he worshiped GOD first. So they schemed, "Darius, may you live forever. Let us set up a decree that for thirty days, nobody can petition any man or god except for you, or they will be thrown to the lions for their disloyalty." Darius saw no flaws with this idea, and signed it by writing according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which cannot be changed.

And Daniel went into his house and knelt three times a day, praying to GOD, as he had always done. But the other advisers asked, "Haven't you signed a law that every man who will make petition to any god or man within thirty days, except to you, will be cast into the den of lions?" Darius answered,

---

[570] I've said before that I don't believe in Second Coming or end of the world. Rather, JESUS is already here on the throne, and his kingdom is forever. However, history sorta "rhymes" in terms of repeating itself. Biden defied GOD and became like a wild beast (like Nebuchadnezzar). Kamala Harris, like Belshazzar, has lax policy and open borders, and America may likely fall like Babylon, with her probably violently killed by the immigrants. If she would seek to reign long, she should take this as advice.

"That is correct, I have signed this in writing according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which cannot be changed." They answered, "We found this Daniel praying to GOD, three times a day, in disobedience to this law." Now Darius loved and respected Daniel, but he could do nothing. While he sought to reverse his decision, the satraps and administrators reminded him that this law was set up so that he could not abuse his power. So Darius said, "I will pray for you. Your GOD who you serve continually, he will deliver you."

A stone was brought, and the king sealed it with his own signet ring, then no person who served him could reverse this decision. And he spent the night fasting and praying. And that morning he returned to lion's den. And the stone was split apart.[571] The king called to Daniel, "Daniel, servant of the living GOD. Was your GOD, who you serve continually, able to deliver you from the lions?" And Daniel said, "Oh king, live forever. My GOD has sent his angel, and has shut the lions' mouths, and they have not hurt me, because before him innocence was found in me and also before you, my king, have I done no wrong." Then Darius called for his release, and Daniel left the den. And the king commanded those men who had accused Daniel be cast into the den of lions, their children, and their wives. And the lions overpowered them, and broke all their bones in pieces, before they came to the bottom of the den.

Then king Darius wrote to all the people, "Peace be multiplied to you. I make a decree, that in all the dominion of my kingdom men tremble and fear before the GOD of Daniel; for he is the living GOD, and steadfast forever. His kingdom will not be destroyed; and his dominion will be to the end. He delivers and rescues, and he works signs and wonders in Heaven and in Earth, who has delivered Daniel from the power of the lions." So Daniel prospered in the reign of Darius, and in the reign of Cyrus the Persian.[572]

THE RETURN TO ISRAEL

CHAPTER 1

And the people of Jacob and Abraham began to return to Israel from captivity to Babylon.[573] As Babylon was beginning to fall, Cyrus of Persia[574] made an edict, for his heart was moved by the LORD on behalf of the people of Israel. And this is what his proclamation said,

> *The LORD, the GOD of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth and he has appointed me to build a temple for him at Jerusalem in Judah. Any of his people among you may go up to Jerusalem in Judah and build the temple of the LORD, the GOD of Israel, the GOD who is in Jerusalem, and may their GOD be with them. And in any locality where survivors may now be living, the people are to provide them with silver and gold, with goods and livestock, and with freewill offerings for the temple of GOD in Jerusalem.*

And people were sent to rebuild the land of Israel, for it had been badly destroyed in the past. These three were known as Zerubbabel, Ezra, and Nehemiah. Zerubbabel came first with a large group of people in order to rebuild the temple of the LORD. After that, Ezra arrive in Jerusalem as a scholar of the law in order to teach the Torah. Finally, Nehemiah came in order to build the walls of the temple and to bless them.

CHAPTER 2

In the seventh month, after the Israelites settled in their towns, the people assembled in Jerusalem. And Zerubbabel and his associates began to build the altar of the GOD of Israel to sacrifice burnt offerings on it, in accordance with what is written in the law of Moses. They greatly feared the people around them, but even more was their fear and reverence in regard to the LORD. So they built the altar on its foundation and sacrificed evening and morning burnt offerings on it to the LORD. Then in accordance with what is written, they celebrated the Festival of Tents with the required number of

---

[571] This didn't happen in the original text of the Bible. I'm trying to draw a parallel between this and the stone that sealed JESUS's tomb. Also, if he sealed it with his own signet ring, and he was bound by the laws of the Medes and the Persians, logically even he couldn't let Daniel out unless someone greater than him broke the seal, so yeah I added it in.

[572] After this, Daniel has a series of prophecies, but the narrative breaks in a way that suggests this was an addition.

[573] This combines the contents of Ezra and Nehemiah, as they were once one book.

[574] The conquering of Babylon by the Persians and the Medes confuses things a bit, but Cyrus and by extension Darius are largely Persian. For any keeping up with current events, this is what is at stake with Iran's relationship with Israel. These people have forgotten that they used to have a contract to protect the state of Israel.

burnt offerings prescribed for each day.
Then they presented burnt offerings for the new moon, and all appointed sacrifices for the LORD, as they were commanded to by the law. On the first day of the seventh month[575] they began to offer burnt offerings to the LORD, though the foundation of the LORD's temple had not yet been laid. After this, they began work on the temple itself.
They gave money to skilled masons and carpenters, gave food and drink and olive oil to the people of Sidon and Tyre, so that they would bring cedar logs by sea from Lebanon to Joppa, as authorized by Cyrus. In the second month of the second year after their arrival at the house of GOD in Jerusalem, Zerubbabel began work on the temple, and he appointed Levites to supervise the building. When the builders laid the foundation of the temple of the LORD, the priests had on their vestments and brought trumpets, and the Levites also brought cymbals, and they took their places to praise the LORD as David had commanded when he was king of Israel. They sang these words to the LORD, "The LORD is good, his mercy endures forever." And there was great joy because the foundation was laid, but many older priests wept aloud, that none could distinguish the shouts of joy from the weeping.[576]

CHAPTER 3

Now there is something that you must understand about these people. They were righteous people, they were committed people, and they were earnest people. But like all people, they were human beings. They were inspired to do the will of GOD, but they could not know what GOD was thinking. And so, it was possible for them to make their own decisions, and in so doing, make mistakes.
The people known as Samaritans also had a history from Abraham, but had not shared history from the captivity of Babylon. They also wanted to be involved in the building of the temple, saying, "This is also our GOD, let us assist in the construction, that we may also worship in this place. We seek your GOD and have been sacrificing to him since the time of the king of Assyria, who brought us here." But Zerubbabel and his men did not consider them to be the true people of GOD, and accused their ancestors of idol worship. He told them, "You have no part with us in building a temple to our GOD. We alone will build it for the LORD, the GOD of Israel, as King Cyrus, the king of Persia, commanded us." For the split between southern Judah and northern Israel was still a stumbling block in people's minds. And eventually, the Samarians went to the mountain of Gerizim to worship. But in the mean time, they decided to thwart the building of the temple. They pressured the people led by Zerubbabel so they were afraid to continue building. They also bribed officials to work against them and frustrate their plans.[577] Though the foundation was laid, the temple itself could not yet be built. And these events happened in the years of the conquest of Egypt.

CHAPTER 4

In the years of Darius I, the people of Israel returned in earnest from Babylon. The edict of Cyrus had been rediscovered, and in the sixth year of Darius, rebuilding the temple began again. However, the process of rebuilding was later halted again by his son Xerxes and by Artaxerxes. For a letter was written by those who opposed the building of the temple. And these were its words:

> *To King Artaxerxes, from your servants in Trans-Euphrates,*
> *The king should know that the people who came up to us from you have gone to Jerusalem and are rebuilding that rebellious and wicked city. They are restoring the walls and repairing the foundations. The king should know that if this city is built and its walls are restored, no more taxes, tribute or duty will be paid, and eventually the royal revenues will suffer. Now since we are under obligation to the palace and it is not proper for us to see the king dishonored, we are sending this message to inform the king, so that a search may be made in the archives of your predecessors. In these records you will find that this city is a rebellious city, troublesome to kings and provinces, a place with a long history of sedition. That is why this city was destroyed. We inform the king that if this city is built and its walls are restored, you will be left with nothing in Trans-Euphrates.*

At these words, he ordered the building to be stopped, and sent enforcement to ensure this. And it is

---

[575] This would be Rosh Hoshana.
[576] This is how the LORD works. Both joy and sorrow are part of his work.
[577] Nothing has changed here. This sort of opposition is behind things like permits and building codes, and reasons why buildings cannot simply be built as intended.

possible these letters came from the same Samaritan tribes that halted work in the first instance. In any case, all work stopped until the rule of Darius II.

CHAPTER 5

Now Zerubbabel and his men attempted to rebuild the temple, but were stopped by Tattenai, who was governor of Trans-Euphrates. They were asked, "who authorized you to work on this temple?" And Tattenai sent word to Darius II, with their response.

> *To King Darius,*
> *The king should know that we went to the district of Judah, to the temple of the great GOD. The people are building it with large stones and placing the timbers in the walls. The work is being carried on with diligence and is making rapid progress under their direction. We questioned the elders and asked them, "Who authorized you to rebuild this temple and to finish it?" We also asked them their names, so that we could write down the names of their leaders for your information. They told us, "We are the servants of the GOD of heaven and earth, and we are rebuilding the temple that was built many years ago, one that a great king of Israel built and finished. But because our ancestors angered the GOD of heaven, he gave them into the hands of Nebuchadnezzar the Chaldean, king of Babylon, who destroyed this temple and deported the people to Babylon. However, in the first year of Cyrus, he issued an edict that we were to rebuild the house of GOD. He even removed the articles of gold and silver that were in the temple of Babylon, which had been stolen when our people went into captivity." Now if it pleases the king, let a search be made in the royal archives of Babylon to see if King Cyrus did in fact issue a decree to rebuild this house of GOD in Jerusalem. Then let the king send us his decision in this matter.*

And this is how the edict of Cyrus was rediscovered under the reign of Darius II.

CHAPTER 6

Darius II sent word back to Tattenai verifying that he had discovered there was such an edict, and commanding him to follow it. The expenses for the project came from the royal treasury, and he told anyone that if this was defied, a beam was to be taken from their own house, and they would be impaled on it. And any families of those who defied would find that their house would be reduced to rubble. He also made an oath, "May GOD, who has caused his Name to dwell there, overthrow any king or people who lifts a hand to change this decree or to destroy this temple in Jerusalem."

And Tattenai, on hearing this edict, gave his whole heart to carrying it out. And when the temple was completed, it was dedicated with the sacrifices of animals. For the dedication of this house of GOD they offered a hundred bulls, two hundred rams, four hundred male lambs and, as a sin offering for all Israel, twelve male goats, one for each of the tribes of Israel. And they installed the priests and the Levites for the service of GOD at Jerusalem, according to what is written in the books of Moses. On the fourteenth day of the first month, the exiles celebrated the Passover. And the slaughtered the lamb of Passover, and for seven days celebrated the Feast of Unleavened Bread. This was during the time of the Peloponnesian War, and Persia supported the Spartans.

CHAPTER 7

After this, Ezra came to Jerusalem during the time of Artaxerxes,[578] and he began to reinstate the traditions and laws of Moses. He was followed not long after by Nehemiah. Artaxerxes sent a letter to Ezra telling him to do what seemed best to him, and to appoint judges and magistrates to govern the land. As for Nehemiah, he prayed and fasted before the LORD, asking for success in his endeavor. And Artaxerxes likewise sent him to Jerusalem.

While Ezra was instructing the people about the law and how a separation[579] should be made between themselves and finding that there was a sorry state even of the Levites, Nehemiah was inspecting the walls of Jerusalem and finding that before even considering the temple walls, the area from the Valley Gate toward the Dung Gate had been torn down. While Nehemiah set to work rebuilding these walls,

---

[578] Historians mainly agree that this is the reign of Artaxerxes I. Historians apparently lack common sense. Would it make any sense for Artaxerxes I to support the teaching of Torah and the attempts to make Israel Jewish again, when he saw the temple building itself as sedition? Nonsense. This is during the reign of Artaxerxes II, after Darius II.

[579] Drawing a parallel between the "walls" of the Jewish law against corrupting influence and Nehemiah's building literal walls.

Ezra reinstated laws about intermarriage with the tribes that were at war with Israel.[580] And those guilty of intermarriage in the past confessed their sins.
And Nehemiah continued building his walls, not only around Jerusalem, but to separate the temple from the secular world. And this is how the wall of Israel was rebuilt. Eliashib the high priest and his fellow priests went to work and rebuilt the Sheep Gate. They dedicated it and set its doors in place, building as far as the Tower of the Hundred. The adjoining section was built by the men of Jericho, and Zakkur son of Imri built next to them. The Fish Gate was rebuilt by the sons of Hassenaah, and they put its doors and bolts and bars in place. Meremoth son of Uriah repaired the next section. Next to him Meshullam son of Berekiah made repairs, and next to him Zadok son of Baana also made repairs. The next section was repaired by the men of Tekoa, but their nobles would not put their shoulders to the work under their supervisors. The Old Gate was repaired by Joiada son of Paseah and Meshullam son of Besodeiah. And so on. To list every group would take more words than most people are comfortable with, because they are strangers. But not to the people of Israel. Each of these were people they knew of, and remembered. Family after family, tribe after tribe, all of these were people important to GOD and to the people of Israel. There were not only craftsmen, but also goldsmiths, perfume makers and merchants, there were even priests and rulers of the area. Not only was the Valley Gate and Dung Gate repaired, where Nehemiah spotted the most problems, but also the Fountain Gate, the Pool of Siloam, the area near the King's Garden, the Water Gate, the Horse Gate, the Inspection Gate, the Sheep Gate, and others until at last the wall was complete. The people of Israel were of twelve tribes. But as they worked together on this wall, GOD made them one nation under GOD.[581] This was a nation that could never be overthrown, so long as they are united in their fear of the LORD.

CHAPTER 8

But of course, seldom is a nation united completely. While the wall was being worked on, a man named Sanballat[582] began to angrily criticize their work, "What are those feeble Jews doing? Will they restore their wall? Will they offer sacrifices? Will they finish in a day? Can they bring the stones back to life from those heaps of rubble—burned as they are?" And a friend at his side named Tobiah the Ammonite laughed at them, "Even a fox could climb over those walls!" And the people of Israel prayed to GOD in the face of such insults, and the gaps in the walls began to close.
When Sanballat, Tobiah, the other Ammonites, and some people of Arabia saw that the wall was closing successfully, their mocking turned to anger, and they started to fight against those building the wall. But though their strength was fading from long hours of work, Nehemiah reminded them, "Don't be afraid of them. Remember the LORD, who is great and awesome, and fight for your families, your sons and your daughters, your wives and your homes. GOD will protect you and give you strength." And so, GOD frustrated their plot to kill them and stop their work. After this point, half of the men were armed, and half built the wall. But they were spread thin, so Nehemiah said to the people, "When you hear the sound of the trumpet, join us there. GOD will fight for us!"
Because they were under siege, there was a famine in the land. And some people charged interest for food, and there was an outcry about it. So Nehemiah put a stop to this excessive charging for food, and urged those involved to have the lands back and to stop charging interest. And so, even though Nehemiah was focused on building a wall, he also kept his commitment to the poor.
When the wall was completed, all of the enemies who opposed the building were frustrated, because the LORD had completed it with the help of the people of Israel.[583]

CHAPTER 9

When the seventh month came and the Israelites had settled in their towns, all the people came together as one in the square before the Water Gate. They told Ezra to bring out the law of Moses, which the LORD had commanded for Israel. And the assembly was made up of men and women, and all who were able to understand. And he read from daybreak until noon, telling the story of Israel and praising the LORD. And all who heard raised their hands and shouted "Amen! Amen!" So it was that

---

[580] The Hethite, the Girgashite, the Amorite, the Canaanite, the Perizzite, the Hivite, and the Jebusite were forbidden to marry.
[581] Drawing a comparison between Israel and America's own slogan.
[582] A reference to one whose days are numbered.
[583] Inverting the idea that we do things, and the LORD helps. We are GOD's assistants, and we shouldn't think we do all the work.

Ezra and Nehemiah were among the people. And this day was announced as holy day.[584] And they were instructed by Nehemiah, Ezra, and the Levites, "Do not mourn or weep," for some were weeping at hearing the words of the law of Moses, "Go and enjoy choice food and sweet drinks, and send some to those who have nothing prepared." And so the people did. The second day of the seventh month, the people again gathered to listen to Ezra, and he instructed them to go spread the word of the LORD, and he also told them, "Go out into the hill country and bring back branches from olive and wild olive trees, and from myrtles, palms and shade trees, to make temporary shelters" as they had done as part of the Festival of Tents. And they celebrated for seven days, with each day having more people than the last, and on the eighth day there was an assembly.

And during the assembly, the people confessed their sins and the sins of the past, and renewed their commitment to GOD. After this, the people that were in Jerusalem was many, so they cast lots. Nine would go to other cities, and the tenth would remain in Jerusalem. And the wall of Jerusalem and of the temple were dedicated, and choirs sung in praise.

Nehemiah had three final reforms. He wanted for the Sabbath to be scrupulously observed, and to this end, he shut the gates and punished those who bought and sold during the Sabbath, who carried loads during Sabbath, or merchants who spent the night outside Jerusalem. He wanted to prohibit Ammonites and Moabites from being among the assembly. But it was discovered that one of the priests named Eliashib had previously given him room and food. He also saw men married to women from Ashdod, Moab, or Ammon and could not speak the language correctly. Generally, these were punished and driven out. He lastly wanted to be sure that the offerings were properly going to the Levites. And Israel after the influence of Zerubbabel, Ezra, and Nehemiah was a strong land defended from its enemies. But it also brought with it problems that the priesthood would debate about in years to come.[585]

EZEKIEL

Now Ezekiel was one of the younger men taken to Babylon during the captivity. He served as a counselor to the Hebrew exiles who were allowed to live by themselves in a colony near the banks of the Kebar River. And GOD came to Ezekiel and showed him a vision. And he saw a number of strange beings, four living creatures surrounded as if by fire, and something that appeared to be wheels within wheels, and the creatures lifted and moved around but the wheels kept pace. And the living creatures had something like a dome covering their heads. And there was a throne in which the LORD sat, which itself was like a living thing.[586]

GOD said to Ezekiel, "Son of man, I am sending you to the Israelites, to a rebellious nation that has rebelled against me... And whether they listen or fail to listen (for they are a rebellious house) they will know that a prophet has been among them." He was then given a scroll to eat, and he found it tasted as sweet as honey.

For Ezekiel knew that the message he was given by the LORD predicted doom and disaster, yet he was willing.

Now the people who were left in Jerusalem after the first captivity consoled themselves with the idea that they were better off than their brethren who were taken to Babylon. They believed that the LORD would protect them from any foreign power and that neither the city of Jerusalem nor the Judean kingdom would ever be overthrown. But GOD judges all the Hebrews equally. He informed them that the city would be destroyed and explained through symbols why it would be overthrown.

For example, on a piece of tile, he drew a picture of Jerusalem under siege and placed the tile in a prominent place, where it could be seen plainly by all those who walked along the street. He lay on his left side for a period of time each day for three hundred and ninety days, and then he lay on his

---

[584] This is called the Feast of Trumpets.

[585] This would be some of the issues in JESUS's time, when they took observation of Sabbath more seriously than mercy.

[586] A few things here. First, this is commonly explained as UFO experience. This is consistent with the atmospheric helmet that he later describes, clearly to protect these creatures from a difference in air pressure. Second, it appears as though the five things are connected, but it's basically the inverse of a man sitting on a cart with four wheels. The living are moving the nonliving, not the other way around. Whereas we humans assign importance to labor-saving devices, to GOD, these are secondary to life. This is like a chariot that the LORD uses to move about.

right side in a similar manner for forty days.
Ezekiel explained that for each day he lay on his left side, northern Israel would be in captivity for one year, and for each day he lay on his right side, the southern kingdom (Judah) would spend a year in captivity. Both groups of Hebrews must suffer for their disobedience.
He cut off his hair, dividing it into three parts that symbolized northern Israel, the Judeans left in Jerusalem, and those in captivity in Babylon. These were the Hebrews of Israel.
He rationed his food, carried furniture out of his house, and did various other things to represent the disaster that would soon overtake the city of Jerusalem.
Ezekiel explained that the reason for the captivities that had already occurred, as well as for the one in store for the people left in Jerusalem, is the people's defiance of the LORD's laws. The LORD rules supreme over all the nations of Earth, so any violation of the LORD's commands without appropriate punishment constitutes an infringement upon GOD'S honor. Such violations are serious matters. While GOD has forgiven Israel's sins in the past because its atonement, a penalty must be met. Jerusalem must be destroyed because of its sins. It had committed great idolatry, worshiped foreign deities, and violated the conduct of worship. It is not the fathers that may be punished for the sins of their sons nor the sons punished for the sins of their fathers, but the person who sins that is guilty. And the price of that sin is death. Ezekiel believed that if GOD were to judge us justly, a person's entire life will be judged in terms of that individual's last act. Concerning the man who has lived wickedly all of his life but turns from his wickedness and does that which is lawful and right immediately before he dies, all of his wickedness will not be remembered, for he will be judged as a righteous man. The reverse is true of the man who has lived righteously all of his life but turns to wickedness just before he dies. All of his righteousness will not be remembered.
Yet the people were confused. For Ezekiel said the city of Jerusalem would fall, yet the LORD had said that his presence in the holy place in the temple was a guarantee that the city would never be overthrown. Isaiah had said that Jerusalem was Zion's city and would stand forever. For Jeremiah, there was less assurance. The LORD's dwelling place is in human hearts rather than in a specific place in the temple. While Ezekiel also agreed with this, the LORD's presence is located in the temple more than in any other place. How then could the temple be destroyed so long as the LORD's presence was in it? According to Ezekiel, if the LORD's presence went up out of the temple and rested on a hill outside; then the temple fell.
Ezekiel explained that other nations are also subject to the LORD's laws. The fact that they do not worship the LORD does not matter. They also will be punished for their sins. Yet Ezekiel did not believe, even though the LORD is a universal GOD, that the LORD offers the same relationship with the foreign nations as he does to the people of Israel. For Ezekiel was a Hebrew first. The LORD punishes the Israelites in order to teach them a lesson that they have refused to learn in any other way. But in the case of foreign nations, Ezekiel believed punishment is not meant to teach a lesson that will bring about their conversion. With them, the coming destruction is to be final and does not anticipate any reformation on their part. For the chosen people, the LORD will transform them by putting his own spirit into their hearts. This restoration will include all kingdoms.
Then Ezekiel saw a valley of dry bones, given flesh, breath, and finally hope of connection. Ezekiel proclaims a complete restoration of the whole house of Israel. The Israelites will return to their own land and rebuild the kingdom that was overthrown, and the LORD will dwell in their midst forever. The foreign nations that make war against GOD'S land will be defeated and destroyed. GOD will bless those who bless them, and curse those who curse them, as was the covenant.
Ezekiel also mentions that the East Gate must be remain closed "because the LORD has entered it." He tells that only the prince of the LORD is able to enter and eat in the presence of the LORD. It is unclear whether this prince refers to JESUS (or all Christians), but it has already been fulfilled. More about that later.
Ezekiel then explained about the restored state of GOD'S land. The Temple[587] would be built outside the main part of Jerusalem, constructed in such a manner that will make it possible to keep out those persons and objects that might contaminate the holy place in which the LORD dwelled.[588]

[587] Note that we've switched to uppercase. This Temple is JESUS.
[588] It is entirely possible that this new Temple will be entirely spiritual, fulfilling what JESUS later says about true worshipers

Ezekiel explained a distinction between priests and Levites in order that only qualified persons should enter the Temple, even for the purpose of keeping it clean. The highest official no longer will be the king but rather the high priest[589], thus indicating that political affairs will always be made subordinate to religious considerations.

These are the features of the Temple that Ezekiel predicted. Where once was a wall of partition between the outer and inner courts of the Temple, there is none mentioned. This means Gentiles and Hebrews are no longer separated, so long as they are there to worship peacefully. In Solomon's temple, there was a court for the men in view of the altar of sacrifice, and a court on the other side of a wall for women. In Ezekiel's vision, no such wall separating men and women is mentioned. There will be no laver for washing, as GOD told to Ezekiel, "For I will take you from among the nations and gather you out of all lands, and will gather you into your own land. And I will sprinkle clean waters on you, and you will be clean. I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from your idols. And I will give you a new heart, and I will put a new spirit within you. And I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh. And I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgements and do them." Ezekiel made no mention of another very important furnishing in the Holy Place of the former temple. In the former temple, on every Sabbath, the priests prepared loaves of bread and placed them on a golden table in the Holy Place. This signified that GOD was the Sustenance of Israel, the Bread from Heaven. The vision of Ezekiel's Temple makes no mention of the table of showbread. For GOD will provide for us, not the priests. The altar of incense was also missing from the Holy Place in Ezekiel's Temple. We understand that incense offered up daily, morning and evening, represented prayer, yet it was absent. The incense represented intercessory prayer, for the priests were mediators for the children of Israel. Their job was to offer sacrifices and pray for Israel. But they only represented temporary event. During the messianic kingdom there will be no need for the altar of incense in the Temple because the Messiah Himself will be present in Jerusalem and available to hear the petitions of His people. Ezekiel didn't mention the veil covering the entrance to the Holy of Holies in his vision of the Temple. With veil torn, the Holy of Holies is now open to all those chosen by GOD to enter. Nor did he mention the ark of the covenant, the mercy seat, and the cherubim overshadowing the mercy seat, which were in the Holy of Holies. The ark of the covenant was the graven image of GOD'S presence, but such images will be needed. The altar of sacrifice situated in the inner court of the former temple was traditionally approached from the south by a ramp, whereas Ezekiel's vision showed the altar approached by steps from the east. So now there are steps, whereas previously they were forbidden because of nakedness. Which means either the LORD has removed our nakedness, or the people of GOD are in the state of nakedness as were Adam and Eve before they sinned, wherein is no shame. We no longer fearfully conceal ourselves from the LORD, being justified by his sacrifice. We walk in newness of life, understanding that all things are naked before him. We now see him face to face.

ZECHARIAH

Zechariah was entirely too long, and had many passages that modern Jews have since used to claim that JESUS was not the Messiah. For instance, he was supposed to be a warrior king, who would unite all peoples, and drive out Judaism's enemies, rebuild the temple, etc. The thing is, prophets are human, and can sometimes predict what they want to happen, rather than what GOD tells them. Nonetheless, JESUS predicted that those after him would come not in the name of GOD and for the purposes of peace, but in his own name, and that many of them would accept him instead. Unfortunately, this also has also been fulfilled. The man's name was Muhammad, and he definitely fit the bill of a warrior king. And indeed he did rebuild a temple on the mountain. But when his temple was not accepted, he and his people made war against the Jews. This is why I don't trust Zechariah. His hope was fulfilled, but with a false prophet. Meanwhile, the Jews remain unpleasable, neither

---

conducting their prayers not in a specific place, but in spirit and in truth. In some sense, then, this is already fulfilled. But the physical temple either could be fulfilled with the synagogue system or if GOD ordains that a temple be built.

[589] This is again, apparently already fulfilled. The president of Israel is not the leader of the country, but now the prime minister. The same is true of most countries with kings, they have been replaced by the constitutional monarchy system where they are secondary to the prime minister and subject to the parliament.

accepting JESUS because he didn't achieve their standards (but he did rebuild the temple, as he built a spiritual Temple where true worshippers could worship in spirit) nor Muhammad either.
Zechariah's real prophecies are rather limited. JESUS's rule is based on Daniel, which can be read as a kingdom built as a foundation under the kingdoms of the world. That is, the kings of the world still rule selfishly and as tyrants, but JESUS is the true ruler. And he will make sure that they are overthrown, often by their own excesses. As far as JESUS ruling as kings like they knew them, JESUS himself explained that the kings of the world lord over others, but it will not be so with his followers, or his kingdom.
Regarding remaining predictions, there is really only one. That the Messiah will come, that he will enter the East Gate in triumph, riding a donkey, and that he will offer up the perfect sacrifice for the sins of the world. In case you missed it, this is JESUS. He offered his own life for the sins on all mankind. This is a stumbling block to the Jews, as they think that the Torah prohibits GOD from taking the form of a man. They also object to it on the grounds that GOD forbids human sacrifice. Yet some Jews don't make the connection with that and abortion, even today. And there is a distinct difference from a man willingly offering to sacrifice themselves for a greater purpose, and the blood sacrifice of the Babylonians and Sumerians, where the subject had no choice. Nor do they pay any mind to the fact that GOD specifically objected to innocent sacrifices, and desired mercy rather than sacrifice. All of these things were overlooked, while the Hebrew people yearly killed thousands of lambs, and slaughtered numerous other animals for atonement of sins. JESUS died for us.
Zechariah also describes the Day of the LORD. This is what Christians often call the Second Coming, but I largely do not believe in such a thing. I believe essentially that the resurrection was the Second Coming, and that Christ's rule on this Earth has been essentially paved over, so that the public are deceived by a delusion. So I will recount what this prophecy says. The LORD himself will fight for Israel, and then will come the Day of the LORD. The LORD himself will pierce and they will look upon him who they pierced, and then will come the Day of the LORD. The Day of the LORD will be unlike any other day, a day without darkness or light, where the night will be as bright as day. [590]
After that, all of the nations including Judaism's enemies will celebrate the Feast of Tents, and those that don't celebrate will not have rain fall on them and will be under a plague. After that, there will be no more need of prophecy, nor of prophets.[591]
It is my understanding that this is not some end times event, but that JESUS has already come. In the eternal now of GOD, those who allow JESUS into their tent are under GOD's blessing, while those who refuse are under a curse. Or as some of the letters put it, they are under a "great delusion" that GOD is cursing them. Or as Trump once put it, some people (he mentioned the homeless) are living in their own filth, if you apply that instead to sin. I have seen this with so-called atheists too, they are hung up on the notion that a GOD they claim not to believe in is a tyrant.
The Messiah has two jobs. There is the Messiah that dies on behalf of sins, and the Messiah that leads Israel in victory against his enemies. Rather than see these as two different people, these are the same person. So either the Jews reject JESUS because he hasn't been the one to lead Israel against its enemies, or Christians see JESUS as a nonviolent Messiah type and reject the idea of him siding with Israel. But only Zechariah sees both prophecies, as though the job is not done until the Messiah does the whole thing. Or to put it another way, Superman rescues people and fights the bad guy, and wouldn't be seen as a complete hero unless he did both. Justice and mercy are both needed, for justice without mercy is tyranny, and mercy without justice is wickedness.
But the bottom line is that this can be both an eternal and temporal event. It is eternal in that it is on some level happening at all times, yet it is temporal in the sense that things may at times come to pass, but ultimately it is particularly important to remember that GOD is with us. Whether or not humanity reaches that point is a distraction from what GOD does for us in the hear and now, and we must not fear or misplaced hope do that.

---

[590] There are two distinct occurrences here: a Messiah who fights for Israel, who they rejected JESUS for not being, because he was the other one, the Messiah who was pierced for our transgressions. The Jews define a day as evening then morning. So we have a crucifixion darkness (daylight lunar eclipse) as Evening, and eternal sunlight (nightime lunar eclipse) as Morning.
[591] In other words, history has ended at that point. There is also no more need for historians.

SELECTION OF PSALMS

O LORD OUR LORD

O LORD, our LORD, how majestic is your name throughout the earth! You made your glory higher than heaven! From the mouths of nursing babies you have laid a strong foundation because of your foes, in order to stop vengeful enemies. When I look up at your skies, at what your fingers made, how the moon and the stars that you set firmly in place, I wonder. What are human beings that you think about them; what are human beings that you pay attention to them? You have made them only slightly less than divine, crowning them with glory and grandeur. You let them rule over your handiwork, putting everything under their feet, all sheep and all cattle, and the wild animals too. The birds in the sky, the fish of the ocean, everything that travels the pathways of the sea, all of these are give to them. O LORD our LORD, how excellent is your name in all Earth!

WHY DO YOU HIDE YOURSELF

Why, O LORD, do you stand far away? Why do you hide yourself in my time of trouble?
I see the wicked in their arrogance hotly pursue the poor, laying schemes to take what little they have to live on; let them be caught in the schemes that they have devised. For the wicked boast of the desires of their souls, and those greedy for gain curse and renounce the LORD. In the pride of their faces the wicked do not seek him, all their thoughts are, "There is no GOD." Their ways prosper at times, yet your judgments are on high, out of their sight. They says in their hearts, "I shall not be moved; throughout all generations I shall not meet adversity." Their mouths are filled with cursing and deceit and oppression; their tongues are filled with mischief and injustice.
The villagers live their lives, but the wicked take aim at them in ambush, and in hiding places they murder the innocent. Their eyes stealthily watch for the helpless, and with harsh schemes they lurk like a lion in the thicket. They lurk that they may seize the poor, when they draw him into the net. The helpless are crushed by hard rules and taxes,[592] sink down, falling under this might, while the wicked says in their hearts, "GOD has forgotten, he has hidden his face, I will never see it." Therefore, arise, our LORD. Lift your hand, GOD. Forget not the afflicted. Why does the wicked renounce GOD and say in their hearts, "You will not call me to account"? But you *do* see, for you note mischief and vexation, that you may take it into your hands. To you the helpless commits, and you have been the helper of the fatherless. You defend[593] the righteous from the arm of the wicked and evildoer, and you call their wickedness to account until they repent.
The LORD is King forever and ever, the enemy nations are flesh and blood. O LORD, you hear the desire of the afflicted. You will strengthen their heart, you will incline your ear to do justice to the fatherless and the oppressed, so that man who is of the earth may strike terror no more.

HEAVEN DECLARES THE GLORY

Heaven declares the glory of GOD, and the firmament shows his effort.
There is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard.
Their sound extends throughout the world; their words reach the ends of the earth. GOD has made a tent in heaven for the sun. The sun is like a groom coming out of his honeymoon suite; like a warrior, it thrills at running its course. It rises in one end of the sky; its circuit is complete at the other. Nothing escapes its heat.[594]
The law of the LORD is perfect, reviving one's very being. The LORD's testimony is certain, making naive people wise. The LORD's regulations are right, gladdening the heart. The LORD's commands are pure, giving light to the eyes.
Honoring the LORD is correct, lasting forever. The LORD's judgments are true. All of these are righteous! They are more desirable than gold! They are sweeter than honey, even dripping off the honeycomb! I am enlightened by them, and there is great reward in keeping them.

---

[592] I wanted to make a parallel to unjust government, since recently our state tried to vote to redistrict in the name of "fairness", which would have turned it from mostly equal politically to extremely gerrymandered and skewed, that would eventually result in more taxes, taking guns away, and other harsh laws.
[593] I have changed the focus of the Psalms from punishment to defense.
[594] Note the numerous Flat Earth assumptions. It boggles my mind that Christians agree with NASA instead of the traditional model of Earth described in the Bible.

But can anyone know what they've accidentally done wrong? Clear me of any unknown sin and save your servant from willful sins. Don't let them rule me. Then I will be upright, and I will be innocent from the great transgression.
Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in your sight, O LORD, my strength, and my Redeemer.

MY GOD WHY HAVE YOU FORSAKEN

My GOD, my GOD, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring? O my GOD, I cry in the daytime, but you hear not; and in the night season, and am not silent. But you are holy, O you that inhabits the praises of Israel. Our fathers trusted in you; they trusted, and you did deliver them. They were not confounded.
But I am a worm, and no man; a reproach of men, and despised of the people.
All they that see me laugh me to scorn; they shoot out the lip, they shake the head, saying, "He trusted on the LORD that he would deliver him. Let him deliver him, seeing he delighted in him." But you are he that took me out of the womb. You did make me hope when I was upon my mother's breasts. I was cast upon you from the womb, you are my GOD from my mother's belly.
Many bulls have surrounded me; strong bulls of Bashan have beset me round. They gaped upon me with their mouths, as a ravening and a roaring lion. I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint. My heart is like wax; it is melted in the midst of my bowels. My strength is dried up like a pot shard; and my tongue cleaves to my jaws; and you have brought me into the dust of death. For dogs have surrounded me; the assembly of the wicked have enclosed me. They *pierced* my hands and my feet. I may tell all my bones; they look and stare upon me. They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my clothes. But be not you far from me, O LORD. O my strength, haste you to help me. Deliver me from the sword; my darling from the power of the dog. Save me from the lion's mouth. Be not far from me; for trouble is near, and there is none to help.
I will declare your name unto my brethren; in the midst of the congregation will I praise you. You that fear the LORD, praise him; all you the seed of Jacob, glorify him; and fear him, all you the seed of Israel. For he has not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted; neither has he hid his face from him; but when he cried unto him, he heard. My praise will be of you in the great congregation; I will pay my vows before them that fear him.
The meek will eat and be satisfied; they will praise the LORD that seek him. Your heart will live for ever. All the ends of the world will remember and turn unto the LORD, and all the nations will worship before you. For the kingdom is the LORD's, and he is the governor among the nations.
All they that be fat upon Earth will eat and worship; all they that go down to the dust will bow before him, and none can keep alive his own soul.
A seed will serve him; it will be accounted to the LORD for a generation. They will come, and will declare his righteousness unto a people that will be born, that he has done this.

THE LORD IS MY SHEPHERD

The LORD is my shepherd; I will not want. He makes me to lie down in green pastures, and he leads me beside the still waters. He restores my spirit, and he leads me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.
Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil. For you are with me, your rod and your staff they comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; you anoint my head with oil, and my cup fills over. Surely goodness and mercy will follow me all the days of my life and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever.

EARTH IS THE LORD'S

Earth is the LORD's, and the fullness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein. For he has founded it upon the seas, and established it upon the floods.
Who will ascend into the hill of the LORD? Or who will stand and enter in his holy place? He that has clean hands, and a pure heart; who has not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully.
He will receive the blessing from the LORD, and righteousness from the GOD of his salvation. This is the generation of them that seek him, that seek your face, O Jacob. Lift up your heads, you gates; and be you lift up, you everlasting doors, and the King of Glory will come in.
Who is this King of Glory? The LORD strong and mighty, the LORD mighty in battle. Lift up your

heads, you gates; even lift them up, you everlasting doors; and the King of Glory will come in. Who is this King of Glory? The LORD of Hosts, he is the King of Glory.

GIVE TO THE LORD

Give to the LORD glory and power! Give to the LORD the glory due his name, bow down to the LORD in holy splendor! The LORD's voice is over the waters, the glorious GOD thunders; the LORD is over the mighty waters.
The LORD's voice is strong; the LORD's voice is majestic. The LORD's voice breaks cedar trees, the LORD shatters the cedars of Lebanon. He makes Lebanon jump around like a young bull, and makes Sirion jump around like a young wild ox. The LORD's voice unleashes fiery flames; the LORD's voice shakes the wilderness of Kadesh. The LORD's voice convulses the oaks, strips the forests bare.
But in his temple everyone shouts, "Glory!" The LORD sits enthroned over the floodwaters; the LORD sits enthroned, forever! Let the LORD give strength to his people! Let the LORD bless his people with peace!

I WILL EXALT YOU

I will exalt you, O LORD; for you have lifted me up, and have not made my foes to rejoice over me.
O LORD my GOD, I cried to you, and you have healed me. O LORD, you have brought up my soul from the grave, for you have kept me alive.
Sing unto the LORD, you saints of his, and give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness.
For his anger endures but a moment; in his favor is life. Weeping may endure for a night, but joy comes in the morning. And in my prosperity I said, I will never be moved.
LORD, by your favor you have made my mountain to stand strong; you did hide your face, and I was troubled. I cried to you, O LORD; and unto the LORD I made supplication.
What profit is there in my blood, when I go down to the pit? Will the dust praise you? Will it declare your truth? Hear, O LORD, and have mercy upon me; LORD, be my helper.
You have turned for me my mourning into dancing; you have put off my sackcloth, and girded me with gladness. Of my glory I sing praise to you, and not be silent. O LORD my GOD, I will give thanks unto you for ever.

BLESSED WHOSE TRANSGRESSION IS FORGIVEN

Blessed whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. When I kept quiet, my bones wore out; I was groaning all day long because your hand was heavy upon me. For day and night your hand was heavy upon me, my moisture is turned into the drought of summer.
Then I acknowledged my sin against you, and refused to hide my missing the mark. I said, "I will confess my transgressions unto the LORD, and you forgave me my sin. For this will every one that is godly prays to you in a time when you may be found, so that a great flood of water won't reach them!"
You are my hiding place; you will preserve me from trouble. You will surround me about with songs of deliverance. You say, "I will instruct you and teach you in the way which you will go. I will guide you with my eye. Be you not as the horse, or as the mule, which have no understanding, whose mouth must be held in with bit and bridle, lest they come near unto you."
Many sorrows will be to the wicked, but he that trusts in the LORD, mercy will surround him about.
Be glad in the LORD, and rejoice, you righteous. Shout for joy, all you that are upright in heart.

I WAITED PATIENTLY FOR THE LORD

I waited patiently for the LORD, and he heard my cry. He brought me up out of a horrible pit, out of the mire, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings. And he has put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our GOD. Many will see it, and be afraid.
Others will see it, and will trust in the LORD. Blessed is that man that makes his trust in the LORD, and respects not the proud, nor those who turn aside to lies. Many are your wonderful works which you have done, O LORD my GOD, and your thoughts which are to us. They cannot be reckoned up in order unto you, if I would count them, they are more than can be numbered.
Sacrifice and offering you did not desire, but a body you prepared for me. Burnt offering and sin offering have you not required. Then said I, "I come to you," in the volume of the book it is written of me, "I delight to do your will, O my GOD, and your law is within my heart."
I have preached righteousness in the great congregation, I have not refrained my lips, O LORD, you know. I have not hid your righteousness within my heart, I have declared your faithfulness and your

salvation. I have not concealed your loving-kindness and your truth from the great congregation. Therefore, do not withhold your tender mercies from me, LORD. Let your love and your truth continually preserve me. For innumerable evils have surrounded me about, my own sins have taken hold upon me, so that I am not able to look up. My enemies are more than the hairs of my head. My heart fails me. Be pleased to deliver me, O LORD, make haste to help me. Let them be ashamed and driven backward that seek after my body to destroy it. But let all those that seek you rejoice and be glad in you, let such as love your salvation say continually, "The LORD be magnified. I am poor and needy, yet the LORD thinks upon me." You are my help and my deliverer. Do not delay, my GOD.

BLESSED WHO CONSIDERS THE POOR

Blessed who considers the poor, the LORD will deliver him in time of trouble. The LORD will preserve him, and keep him alive. And he will be blessed upon Earth, and you will not deliver him unto the will of his enemies. The LORD will strengthen him upon the bed of languishing, you will make all his bed in his sickness.

I said, "LORD, be merciful unto me; heal my spirit, for I have sinned against you." For my enemies speak evil of me, "When will he die, and his name perish? And if he come to see me, he speaks vanity. When he goes abroad, he tells it."

All that hate me whisper together against me, against me do they devise my hurt. "An evil disease," they say, "cleaves fast unto him, and now that he lies down let him rise up no more."

My own familiar friend which ate of my bread and in who I trusted has now lifted up his heel against me. But you, O LORD, be merciful unto me. You raise me up, to more than I can be. By this I know that you favor me, because my enemy does not triumph over me.

And as for me, you uphold me in my integrity, and set me before your face for ever. Blessed be GOD of Israel from everlasting, and to everlasting.

GOD IS OUR REFUGE

GOD is our refuge and strength, a help always near in times of great trouble. That's why we won't be afraid when the sky that we look upon should tumble and fall, when the mountains should crumble into the sea.[595] Nor when waters roar and rage, or the mountains shake because of its surging waves. There is a river whose streams gladden GOD's city, the holiest dwelling of the Most High. GOD is in that city. It will never crumble. GOD will help it when morning dawns.

Nations will fall, kingdoms will crumble, for GOD utters his voice and the very earth melts.

But rejoice, for the LORD of heavenly forces is with us! The GOD of Jacob is our place of safety.

Come, see the LORD's deeds, what devastation he has imposed on the earth, bringing wars to an end in every corner of the world, breaking the bow and shattering the spear, and burning chariots with fire.

You say, "That's enough! Now know that I am GOD! I am exalted among all nations; I am exalted throughout the world!" And all implements of war are destroyed.

The LORD of heavenly forces is with us! The GOD of Jacob is our place of safety.

O CLAP YOUR HANDS

O clap your hands, all you people. Shout unto GOD with the voice of triumph. For the LORD most high is awesome, he is a great Shepherd over all Earth. He will subdue the people under us, and the nations under our feet. He will choose our inheritance for us, the excellency of Jacob who he loved.

GOD is gone up with a shout, the LORD with the sound of a trumpet. Sing praises to GOD, sing praises; sing praises unto our King, sing praises. For GOD is the King of all Earth, sing praises with understanding. GOD reigns over the heathen, GOD sits upon the throne of his holiness.

The princes of the people are gathered together, these are the people of the GOD of Abraham. For the shields of Earth belong unto GOD, he is greatly exalted.

HEAR THIS

Hear this, all you people of the world. Both low and high, rich and poor, together.

Listen, no matter who you are, rich or poor, I speak words of wisdom, and my thoughts make sense.

I have in mind a mystery that I will explain while playing my harp. Why should I be afraid in times of trouble, when I am surrounded by vicious enemies?

---

[595] The song *Stand By Me* is actually inspired by this passage, so I had them match better.

They trust in their riches and brag about all their wealth. You cannot buy money with your life,[596] nor can you pay off GOD! For what could be worth the value of a life?[597] You can never pay GOD enough to stay alive forever and safe from death. We see that wise people die, and so do stupid fools. And after they die, their money is left for someone else. The grave will be their home forever and ever, although they once had land of their own. Our human glory disappears, and, like animals, we die.
But GOD will rescue me from the power of death. Don't let it bother you when others get rich and live in luxury. For all men die and all their wealth will be left behind. We humans are praised when we do well, and all of us are glad to be alive. But we each will go down to our ancestors, never again to see the light of day. Our human glory disappears, and, like animals, we die.

THE MIGHTY GOD

The mighty GOD, even the LORD, has spoken, and called Earth from the rising of the sun unto the going down thereof. Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, GOD has shined. Gather my saints together unto me; those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice. And Heaven will declare his righteousness, for GOD is judge himself.
Hear, O my people, and I will speak; I will testify against you, "I am your GOD. I will not reprove you for your sacrifices or your burnt offerings, to have been continually before me. I will take no bullock out of your house, nor he goats out of your folds. For every beast of the forest is mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills. I know all the fowls of the mountains by name, and the wild beasts of the field are mine. If I were hungry, I would not tell you, for the world is mine and the fullness thereof. Will I eat the flesh of bulls, or drink the blood of goats? Offer unto GOD thanksgiving, pay your vows unto the most High, and call upon me in the day of trouble. I will deliver you, and you will glorify me."
But unto the wicked GOD says, "What have you to do to declare my statutes, or that you should take my covenant in your mouth? Seeing you hates instruction, and casts my words behind you. When you saw a thief, then you consented with him, and have been partaker with adulterers. You gave your mouth to evil, and your tongue frames deceit. You sit and speak against your brother, and you slander your own mother's son. These things have you done, and I kept silence. You thought that I was altogether such as yourself. But I will reprove you, and set them in order before your eyes."
Now hear this, you that forget GOD, before I tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver you. Anyone who offers praise glorifies me, and to him that orders his conversation with me, will I show the salvation of GOD.

HAVE MERCY ON ME

Have mercy upon me, O GOD, according to your kindness. You are always merciful!
Please wipe away my sins. Wash me clean from all of my sin and guilt. I know about my sins, and I cannot forget the burden of my guilt. You are really the one I have sinned against. I have disobeyed you and have done wrong, so it is right and fair for you to correct and punish me. I have sinned and done wrong since the day I was born. But you want complete honesty, so teach me true wisdom.
Wash me with hyssop until I am clean and whiter than snow. Let me be happy and joyful!
You crushed my bones, now let them celebrate. Turn your eyes from my sin and cover my guilt.
Create in me a clean heart, O GOD; and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from your presence, nor take your Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and uphold me with your free spirit. I will teach sinners your law, and they will return to you.
Deliver me from bloody guiltiness, you GOD of my salvation, and my tongue will sing of your righteousness. O LORD, open you my lips; and my mouth will show forth your praise. For you desire not sacrifice, or I would give it. You do not delight in burnt offering. The sacrifices of GOD are a broken spirit; a broken and a contrite heart, O GOD, you will not despise. Please be willing, LORD, to help Zion and to rebuild its walls. Then you will be pleased with the proper sacrifices once again.

WHY BOAST

Why boast in mischief, mighty man? The goodness of GOD endures continually. Yet your tongue devises mischief like a sharp razor, working deceitfully. You love evil more than good, and lying rather than to speak righteousness. You love all devouring words, you deceitful tongue.

---

[596] In an anime called *Mosquiton '99*, this was a pet saying of the main character.
[597] Also a line from *Fullmetal Alchemist*.

Therefore, GOD will likewise punish you for your earthly sins,[598] he will pluck you out of your dwelling place, and deliver you to your enemies. The righteous also will see, and will laugh at him, "This is the man that did not make GOD his strength, but trusted in the abundance of his riches, and strengthened himself in his wickedness."
But I am like a green olive tree in the house of GOD, for I trust in the mercy of GOD for ever and ever. I will praise you for ever, because you have done it, and I will wait on your name. For it is good before your saints.

THE FOOL HAS SAID IN HIS HEART

The fool has said in his heart there is no GOD. They are correct and have sinned abominably. There is none that does good. GOD looked down from Heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, that did seek GOD. Every one of them is gone back, they are altogether filthy. There is none that does good, not one.
Have the workers of iniquity no knowledge? They eat up my people as they eat bread, and they have not called upon GOD. There were they in great fear, where no fear was, for GOD has scattered the bones of him that marches against you. You have put them to shame, because GOD has despised them. When GOD brings back the captivity of his people, Jacob will rejoice, and Israel will be glad.

BE MERCIFUL UNTO ME

Be merciful unto me,[599] O GOD, for man would swallow me up; he fighting daily oppresses me. My enemies would daily swallow me up, for they be many that fight against me, O you most High.
What time I am afraid, I will trust in you. In GOD I will praise his word, in GOD I have put my trust, and I will not fear what flesh can do unto me.
Every day they wrest my words, and all their thoughts are against me for evil. They gather themselves together, they hide themselves, and they mark my steps when they wait for me. Will they escape by iniquity?
You tell my wanderings, will you not also put you my tears into your bottle? When I cry unto you, then will my enemies turn back. This I know, for GOD is for me. In GOD will I trust, in the LORD will I praise his word. I will not be afraid what man can do unto me. For your vows are upon me, GOD, and I will render praises unto you. You have delivered my soul from the grave. Will not you deliver my feet from falling, that I may walk before GOD in the light of the living? Therefore, be merciful unto me, GOD, for I trust in you. In the shadow of your wings will I make my refuge, until these calamities be over. I will cry unto GOD most high, unto GOD that performs all things for me. He will send from Heaven, and save me from the reproach of him that would swallow me up. GOD will send forth his mercy and his truth.
I am among lions, and I lie even among them that are set on fire, even the sons of men, whose teeth are spears and arrows, and their tongue a sharp sword. Be you exalted, O GOD, above Heaven, let your glory be above all Earth. For they have prepared a net for my steps; I am bowed down. They have dug a pit before me, into the midst whereof they are fallen themselves.
My heart is fixed, O GOD, I will sing and give praise. Awaken, my glory. Awaken with psaltery and harp; I myself will awake early. I will praise you, O LORD, among the people, and I will sing unto you among the nations. For your mercy is great unto Heaven, and your truth unto the clouds. Let your glory be above all Earth.

DO YOU INDEED SPEAK RIGHTEOUSNESS

Do you indeed speak righteousness, O congregation? Do you judge uprightly, you sons of men? Or in heart, do you work wickedness? You weigh the violence of your hands in Earth.
The wicked are estranged from the womb, they go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies. Their poison is like the poison of a serpent, they are like the deaf adder that stops her ear. They will not hearken to the voice of charmers, charming never so wisely.
Break out the great teeth of the young lions, O LORD. Let them melt away as waters which run continually. When he bends his bow to shoot his arrows, let them fire in vain.

---

[598] I changed "destruction" to "punishment", and "forever" to "for your earthly sins." The idea being that the LORD seeks our reform, rather than punishing to be cruel.
[599] I merged two psalms that started the same way.

As a snail which melts with salt, let every one of them shrivel before your bulwark. Before your pots can feel the thorns, he will take them away as with a whirlwind. The righteous will rejoice when he sees the mercy of the LORD, for he defends us against the wicked. So that a man will say, "There is a reward for the righteous, this a GOD that judges Earth."

DELIVER ME FROM MY ENEMIES

Deliver me from my enemies, O my GOD, defend me from them that rise up against me. Deliver me from the workers of iniquity, and save me from bloody men. For they lie in wait for me, the mighty are gathered against me; not for my transgression, nor for my sin, O LORD. They run and prepare themselves without my fault. Awake to help me, and behold, O GOD of Israel. Awake to visit all the heathen. They return at evening, they make a noise like a dog, and go round about the city. Behold, they belch out with their mouth, and their lips draw words like swords.

But you, LORD, will laugh at them; you will have all the heathen in derision. Because of his strength will I wait upon you, for GOD is my defense. The GOD of my mercy will prevent me from harm, GOD. Slay them not, lest people forget. Scatter them by your power, and bring them down, LORD our shield. Let them even be taken in their pride, and for cursing and lying which they speak. Let them know that GOD rules in Jacob unto the ends of Earth. But I will sing of your power; I will sing aloud of your mercy in the morning. For you have been my defense and refuge in the day of my trouble. Unto you, my strength, will I sing, "GOD is my defense, and my mercy."

O GOD YOU HAVE CAST US OFF

O GOD you have cast us off and scattered us, you have been displeased. Turn yourself to us again. You have made Earth to tremble; you have broken it. Heal the breaches thereof; for it shakes. You have shown your people hard things. You have made us to drink the wine of astonishment. You have given a banner to them that fear you, that it may be displayed because of the truth. That your beloved may be delivered. Save with your right hand, and hear me. GOD has spoken in his holiness, and I will rejoice. Who will bring me into the strong city? Will not you, O GOD, which cast us off? And you, O GOD, which did not go out with our armies? Give us help from trouble, for vain is the help of man. Through GOD we will do valiantly, for he it is that will oppose our tyrants.[600]

HEAR MY CRY

Hear my cry, O GOD. Attend unto my prayer. From the end of Earth will I cry unto you, when my heart is overwhelmed; lead me to the rock that is higher than I. For you have been a shelter for me, and a strong tower from the enemy. I will abide in your Tent for ever, and I will trust in the cover of your wings. For you, O GOD, have heard my vows. You have given me the heritage of those that fear your name.

You will prolong the king's life, and his years as many generations. He will abide before GOD for ever. O prepare mercy and truth, which may preserve him. So will I sing praise unto your name for ever, that I may daily perform my vows.

TRULY MY SOUL WAITS UPON GOD

Truly my soul waits upon GOD, from him comes my salvation. He only is my rock and my salvation; he is my defense. I will not be greatly moved. How long will you imagine mischief against a man? You will be pushed back as a tottering fence. They consult to cast him down from his excellency. They delight in lies and they bless with their mouth, but they curse inwardly. My soul waits you only upon GOD, for my expectation is from him. He only is my rock and my salvation; he is my defense. Therefore, I will not be moved. In GOD is my salvation and my glory, he is the rock of my strength, and my refuge is in GOD.

Trust in him at all times you people, pour out your heart before him; GOD is a refuge for us. Surely men of low degree are vanity, and men of high degree are a lie to be laid in the balance, they also are vanity. Trust not in oppression, and become not vain in robbery, and set not your heart upon them if riches increase. GOD has spoken that all power belongs unto GOD, therefore the oppressed say to their oppressors, "You have no power over me." Also unto you belongs mercy, LORD, for you render to every man according to his work.

---

[600] "Thus always to tyrants."

O GOD YOU ARE MY GOD

O GOD you are my GOD. Early will I seek you, and my heart thirsts for you. My flesh longs for you in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is; I long to see your power and your glory, so as I have seen you in the sanctuary. Because your loving-kindness is better than life, my lips will praise you.
Thus will I bless you while I live, and I will lift up my hands in your name. My spirit will be satisfied as with marrow and fatness; and my mouth will praise you with joyful lips when I remember you upon my bed, and meditate on you in the night watches. Because you have been my help, therefore in the shadow of your wings will I rejoice.
My spirit follows hard after you; your right hand upholds me. But those that seek my life, to destroy it, they will be driven to their death, and will be a portion for foxes.
But the king will rejoice in GOD; every one that swears by him will glory, but the mouth of them that speak lies will be stopped.

HEAR MY VOICE O GOD

Hear my voice O GOD, in my prayer preserve my life from fear of the enemy. Hide me from the secret counsel of the wicked; from the insurrection of the workers of iniquity. These are those who sharpened their tongue like a sword, and bend their bows to shoot their arrows, even bitter words. That they may shoot in secret at perfect aim, even so suddenly do they shoot at me, and I fear not. They encourage themselves in an evil matter, they commune of laying snares privily. They say, "Who will see them?" They search out iniquities and they accomplish a diligent search, for their thoughts of their heart are deep. But GOD will curse them as with an arrow, and all that see them will flee away. So all men will fear, and will declare the work of GOD, for they will consider of his doing. The righteous will be glad in the LORD, and will trust in him. And all the upright in heart will glory.

PRAISE WAITS FOR YOU

Praise waits for you in Zion, O GOD, and unto you will the vow be performed. You that hears prayer, unto you will all flesh come. Iniquities prevail against me; as for our sins, you will purge them away. Blessed is the man who you chooses, and causes to approach unto you, that he may dwell in your courts. We will be satisfied with the goodness of your house, even of your holy temple. By your awesome things in righteousness will you answer us, O GOD of our salvation. You are the confidence of all the ends of Earth, and of them that are afar off upon the sea, which by his strength sets fast the mountains, being girded with power. You still the noise of the seas, the noise of their waves, and the tumult of the people. You only tell them, "Be still," and they are calm.
They also that dwell in the uttermost parts are afraid at your tokens, you make the outgoings of the morning and evening to rejoice. You visit Earth and water it, you greatly enrich it with the river of GOD. You prepare them grain, when you have so provided for it. You water the ridges thereof abundantly, you make the land like furrows. You make it soft with showers, and you bless the springing thereof. You crown the year with your goodness, and your paths drop fatness.
They drop upon the pastures of the wilderness, and the little hills rejoice on every side. The pastures are clothed with flocks; the valleys also are covered over with grain. They shout for joy, and they sing.

MAKE A JOYFUL NOISE

Make a joyful noise unto GOD, all you lands, sing forth the honor of his name and make his praise glorious. Say unto GOD, "How awesome are you in your works! Through the greatness of your power will your enemies submit themselves unto you." All Earth will worship you, and will sing unto you; they will sing to your name. Come and see the works of GOD, for he is fearsome in his doing toward the children of men. He turned the sea into dry land, they went through the flood on foot. Therefore we rejoice in him. He rules by his power for ever; his eyes behold the nations. Let not the rebellious exalt themselves. O bless our GOD, you people, and make the voice of his praise to be heard which holds our soul in life and suffers not our feet to be moved.
For you, O GOD, have proved us. You have tried us, as silver is tried. You brought us into the net, and you laid affliction upon our loins. You have caused men to ride over our heads; we went through fire and through water, but you brought us out into a wealthy place. I will go into your house with burnt offerings, and I will pay you my vows, which my lips have uttered and my mouth has spoken when I was in trouble. I will offer unto you burnt sacrifices of fatlings, with the incense of rams; I will offer bullocks with goats.

Come and hear, all you that fear GOD, and I will declare what he has done for my soul. I cried unto him with my mouth, and he was exalted with my tongue. If I regard iniquity in my heart, the LORD will not hear me. But truly GOD has heard me, and he has attended to the voice of my prayer. Blessed be GOD, which has not turned away my prayer, nor his mercy from me.

GOD BE MERCIFUL UNTO US

GOD be merciful unto us, and bless us; and cause his face to shine upon us; that your way may be known upon Earth, your saving health among all nations.

Let the people praise you, O GOD; let all the people praise you. Let the nations be glad and sing for joy, for you will judge the people righteously, and govern the nations upon Earth.

Let the people praise you, O GOD; let all the people praise you. Then will Earth yield her increase; and GOD, even our own GOD, will bless us. GOD will bless us; and all the ends of Earth will fear him.

SAVE ME O GOD

Save me O GOD,[601] by your name, and judge me by your strength.

Hear my prayer, O GOD; give ear to the words of my mouth. Behold, GOD is my helper, the LORD is with them that uphold my soul. I will freely sacrifice unto you; I will praise your name, O LORD, for it is good. For he has delivered me out of all trouble, and my eye has seen his desire upon my enemies.

Save me, O GOD; for the waters are come in unto me. I sink in deep mire, where there is no standing; I am come into deep waters, where the floods overflow me.

I am weary of my crying; my throat is dried, my eyes fail while I wait for my GOD. They that hate me without a cause are more than the hairs of my head. They that would destroy me, being my enemies wrongfully, are mighty, then I restored that which I took not away. O GOD, you know my foolishness; and my sins are not hid from you. Let not them that wait on you, O GOD of hosts, be ashamed for my sake; let not those that seek you be confounded for my sake, O GOD of Israel.

Because for your sake I have borne reproach; shame has covered my face. I am become a stranger unto my brethren, and an alien unto my mother's children. For the zeal of your house has eaten me up; and the reproaches of them that reproached you are fallen upon me.

When I wept, and chastened myself with fasting, that was to my reproach. I made sackcloth also my garment; and I became a byword to them. They that sit in the gate speak against me; and I was the song of the drunkards. But as for me, my prayer is unto you, O LORD, in an acceptable time. O GOD, in the multitude of your mercy hear me, in the truth of your salvation. Deliver me out of the mire, and let me not sink. Let me be delivered from them that hate me, and out of the deep waters. Let not the water flood overflow above me, neither let the deep swallow me up, and let not the pit shut her mouth upon me. Hear me, O LORD; for your loving-kindness is good; turn unto me according to the multitude of your tender mercies.

And hide not your face from me; for I am in trouble, hear me speedily. Draw nigh unto my soul, and redeem it; deliver me from my enemies. You have known my reproach, and my shame, and my dishonor. My adversaries are all before you.

Reproach has broken my heart; and I am full of heaviness. I looked for some to take pity, but there was none; and for comforters, but I found none. They gave me also gall for my meat; and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink. Let their eyes be darkened, that they see not. Let their habitation be desolate, and let none dwell in their tents. For they persecute him who you have smitten, and they talk to the grief of those who you have wounded. Add iniquity unto their iniquity, and let them not come into your righteousness.

But I am poor and sorrowful; let your salvation, O GOD, set me up on high. I will praise the name of GOD with a song, and will magnify him with thanksgiving. This also will please the LORD better than an ox or bullock that has horns and hoofs. The humble will see this, and be glad; your heart will live that seek GOD.

For the LORD hears the poor, and despises not his prisoners. Let Heaven and Earth praise him, the seas, and every thing that moves therein. For GOD will save Zion and will build the cities of Judah, that they may dwell there and have it in possession. The seed also of his servants will inherit it, and they that love his name will dwell therein.

---

[601] This is also a merged section of two psalms.

MAKE HASTE O GOD TO DELIVER ME

Make haste O GOD to deliver me; make haste to help me, O LORD. Let all those that seek you rejoice and be glad in you, and let such as love your salvation say continually, "Let GOD be magnified." But I am poor and needy; make haste unto me, O GOD. You are my help and my deliverer; O LORD, make no tarrying.

GIVE EAR MY PEOPLE TO MY LAW

Give ear my people to my law, incline your ears to the words of my mouth. I will open my mouth in a parable. I will utter dark sayings of old, which we have heard and known, and our fathers have told us. We will not hide them from their children, showing to the generation to come the praises of the LORD, and his strength, and his wonderful works that he has done. For he established a testimony in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our fathers, that they should make them known to their children. That the generation to come might know them, even the children which should be born; who should arise and declare them to their children. And that they might set their hope in GOD, and not forget the works of GOD, but keep his commandments. That they might not be as their fathers, a stubborn and rebellious generation; a generation that set not their heart aright, and whose spirit was not steadfast with GOD.

GIVE EAR SHEPHERD OF ISRAEL

Give ear Shepherd of Israel, you that lead Joseph like a flock; you that dwell between the cherubims, shine forth. Stir up your strength, and come and save us. Turn us again, O GOD, and cause your face to shine; and we will be saved.

O GOD of hosts, how long will you be angry against the prayer of your people? You feed them with the bread of tears; and gives them tears to drink in great measure. You make us a strife unto our neighbors, and our enemies laugh among themselves.

Turn us again, O GOD of hosts, and cause your face to shine; and we will be saved. You have brought a vine out of Egypt; you have cast out the heathen, and planted it. You prepare room before it, and did cause it to take deep root, and it filled the land.

The hills were covered with the shadow of it, and the boughs thereof were like the goodly cedars. She sent out her boughs unto the sea, and her branches unto the river.

Why have you then broken down her hedges, so that all they which pass by the way do pluck her? The boar out of the wood wastes it, and the wild beast of the field devours it. Return, we beseech you, O GOD of hosts. Look down from Heaven, and behold, and visit this vine. The vineyard which your right hand has planted and the branch that you made strong for yourself, it is burned with fire and it is cut down; they perish at the rebuke of your countenance. Let your hand be upon the man of your right hand, upon the son of man who you made strong for yourself.

So will not we go back from you, quicken us, and we will call upon your name. Turn us again, O GOD of hosts, cause your face to shine; and we will be saved.

HOW AMIABLE ARE YOUR TENTS

How amiable are your Tents, O LORD of hosts! My soul longs for the courts of the LORD, my heart and my flesh cries out for the living GOD.

The sparrow has found a house, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may lay her young, even your altars, O LORD of hosts, my King, and my GOD.

Blessed are they that dwell in your house, they will be still praising you. Blessed is the man whose strength is in you; in whose heart are the ways of them. Who passing through the valley of Baca make it a well; the rain also fills the pools. They go from strength to strength, every one of them in Zion appears before GOD.

O GOD of hosts, hear my prayer. Give ear, O GOD of Jacob. Behold, O GOD our shield, and look upon the face of your anointed. For a day in your courts is better than a thousand. I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my GOD, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness.

For GOD is a sun and shield, the LORD will give grace and glory. No good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly. O LORD of hosts, blessed is the man that trusts in you.

LORD YOU HAVE BEEN FAVORABLE TO YOUR LAND

LORD you have been favorable to your land, you have brought back the captivity of Jacob.

You have forgiven the iniquity of your people, you have covered all their sin. You have taken away all your wrath, you have turned yourself from the fierceness of your anger. Turn us, O GOD of our salvation, and cause your anger toward us to cease.
Will you be angry with us for ever? Will you draw out your anger to all generations? Will you not revive us again, that your people may rejoice in you?
Show us your mercy, O LORD, and grant us your salvation. I will hear what GOD the LORD will speak, for he will speak peace unto his people, and to his saints. But let them not turn again to folly.
Surely his salvation is nigh them that fear him; that glory may dwell in our land. Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other. Truth will spring out of Earth; and righteousness will look down from Heaven. The LORD will give that which is good; and our land will yield her increase. Righteousness will go before him; and will set us in the way of his steps.

BOW DOWN YOUR EAR

Bow down your ear, O LORD, hear me for I am poor and needy. Preserve my soul; for I am holy. You are my GOD, save who that trusts in you. Be merciful unto me, O LORD, for I cry unto you daily.
Rejoice the soul of mine; for unto you, O LORD, I lift up my soul. For you, LORD, are good, and ready to forgive; and plenteous in mercy unto all them that call upon you.
Give ear, O LORD, unto my prayer; and attend to the voice of my supplications. In the day of my trouble I will call upon you, for you will answer me. Among the gods there is none like unto you, LORD; neither are there any works like unto your works.
All nations who you have made will come and worship before you, O LORD; and will glorify your name. For you are great, and does wondrous things. You are GOD alone. Teach me your way, O LORD. I will walk in your truth; unite my heart to fear your name.
I will praise you, O LORD with all my heart; I will glorify your name for evermore. For great is your mercy toward me, and you have delivered my soul from the grave.
O GOD, the proud are risen against me, and the assemblies of violent men have sought after me; and have not set you before them. But you, O LORD, are a GOD full of compassion, gracious, and plenteous in mercy and truth. O turn unto me, and have mercy upon me; give your strength unto me, and save the son of your handmaid. Show me a token for good, that they which hate me may see it and be ashamed; because you, LORD, have helped me, and comforted me.

LORD YOU HAVE BEEN OUR DWELLING PLACE

LORD you have been our dwelling place in all generations. Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever you have formed Earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, you are GOD.
You turn man to destruction; and then you say, "Return, you children of men." For a thousand years in your sight are but as yesterday when it is past, and as a watch in the night.
You carry them away as with a flood; they are as a sleep. They are like grass which grows up. In the morning it flourishes and grows up; in the evening it is cut down and withers.
For we are consumed by your anger, and by your wrath are we troubled. You have set our iniquities before you, our secret sins in the light of your countenance. For all our days are passed away in your wrath, and we spend our years as a tale that is told. The days of our years are threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength or fortune they be fourscore years. Yet it is labor and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away. Who knows the power of your anger? Even according to your fear, so is your wrath. So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.
Return, O LORD, how long? And let it repent you concerning us. O satisfy us early with your mercy; that we may rejoice and be glad all our days. Make us glad according to the days wherein you have afflicted us, and the years wherein we have seen evil. Let your work appear to your people, and your glory unto their children. And let the beauty of the LORD our GOD be upon us, and establish you the work of our hands upon us; you establish it with the work of our hands.

HE THAT DWELLS IN THE SECRET PLACE

He that dwells in the secret place of the most High will abide under the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the LORD, he is my refuge and my fortress. He is my GOD; in him will I trust.
Surely he will deliver you from the snare of the hunter, and from the pestilence. He will cover you with his feathers, and under his wings will you trust, his truth will be your shield and buckler.
You will not be afraid for the terror by night; nor for the arrow that flies by day. Nor for the pestilence

that walk in darkness; nor for the destruction that wastes at noonday.
A thousand will fall at your side, and ten thousand at your right hand; but it will not come nigh you.
Because you have made the LORD your habitation, there will no evil befall you nor will any plague come nigh your dwelling. For he will give his angels charge over you, and they will bear you up in their hands, lest you dash your foot against a stone. You will tread upon the lion and adder; the young lion and the dragon will you trample under feet.
Because he has set his love upon me, therefore will I deliver him. I will set him on high, because he has known my name. He will call upon me, and I will answer him. I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him, and honor him. With long life will I satisfy him, and show him my salvation.

COME LET US SING

Come let us sing unto the LORD, let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation. Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving, and make a joyful noise unto him with psalms. For the LORD is a great GOD, and a great King above all gods.
In his hand are the deep places of Earth; the strength of the hills is his also. The sea is his, and he made it; his hands formed the dry land. O come, let us worship and bow down; let us kneel before the LORD our maker. For he is our GOD; and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand. That today if you will hear his voice.
Harden not your heart, as in the provocation, and as in the day of temptation in the wilderness. When your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my work. Forty years long was I grieved with this generation, and said, "It is a people that do err in their heart, and they have not known my ways." Unto who I swore in my wrath that they should not enter into my rest.

SING UNTO THE LORD

Sing unto the LORD a new song; sing unto the LORD, all Earth. Sing unto the LORD, bless his name; show forth his salvation from day to day. Declare his glory among the heathen, his wonders among all people. For the LORD is great, and greatly to be praised; he is to be feared above all gods.
For all the gods of the nations are idols, but the LORD made Heaven. Honor and majesty are before him, strength and beauty are in his sanctuary. Give unto the LORD, O you kin of the people, give unto the LORD glory and strength. Ascribe unto the LORD the honor due unto his name; bring an offering, and come into his courts.
O worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness; fear before him, all Earth. Say among the heathen that the LORD reigns; the world also will be established that it will not be moved. He will judge the people righteously.
Let Heaven rejoice, and let Earth be glad; let the sea roar, and the fullness thereof. Let the field be joyful, and all that is therein; then will all the trees of the wood rejoice before the LORD when he comes. For he comes to judge Earth, he will judge the world with righteousness, and the people with his truth.

HOLD NOT YOUR PEACE

Hold not your peace, O GOD of my praise; for the mouth of the wicked and the mouth of the deceitful are opened against me, and they have spoken against me with a lying tongue. They surrounded me about also with words of hatred; and fought against me without a cause.
For my love they are my adversaries, but I give myself unto prayer. And they have rewarded me evil for good, and hatred for my love. Set you a wicked man over him, and let the accuser[602] stand at his right hand. When he will be judged, let him be condemned, and let his prayer become sin.
Because that he never remembered to show mercy, but persecuted the poor and needy man that he might even slay the broken in heart, so let it be far from him. Let this be the reward of my adversaries from the LORD, and of them that speak evil against me.
But do you for me, O GOD the LORD, for your name's sake. Because your mercy is good, deliver you me. For I am poor and needy, and my heart is wounded within me. I am gone like the shadow when it declines, I am tossed up and down as the locust. My knees are weak through fasting; and my flesh fails of fatness. I became also a reproach unto them; when they looked upon me they shakes their heads. Help me, O LORD my GOD; O save me according to your mercy. That they may know that this

[602] Here it originally said Satan.

is your hand; that you, LORD, have done it.
Let my adversaries be clothed with shame. When they arise, let them be ashamed; but let me rejoice. For I will greatly praise the LORD with my mouth; I will praise him among the multitude. Therefore, he will stand at the right hand of the poor, to save him from those that condemn his soul.

THE LORD SAID UNTO MY LORD

The LORD said unto my LORD, Sit you at my right hand, until I make your enemies your footstool.
The LORD will send the rod of your strength out of Zion to rule you in the midst of your enemies. Your people will be willing in the day of your power, in the beauties of holiness from the womb of the morning; you have the dew of your youth.
The LORD has sworn, and will not repent, you are a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek. The LORD at your right hand will strike through kings in the day of his wrath. He will judge among the heathen, he will overcome many countries.
He will drink of the brook in the way. Therefore will he lift up the head.

PRAISE YOU THE LORD

Praise you the LORD.[603] Praise GOD in his sanctuary, praise him in the firmament of his power. Praise him for his mighty acts, praise him according to his excellent greatness. Praise him with the sound of the trumpet, praise him with the psaltery and harp. Praise him with the timbrel and dance, praise him with stringed instruments and organs. Praise him upon the loud cymbals, praise him upon the high sounding cymbals. Let every thing that has breath praise the LORD. Praise you the LORD.
Praise you the LORD. I will praise the LORD with my whole heart, in the assembly of the upright, and in the congregation. The works of the LORD are great, sought out of all them that have pleasure therein. His work is honorable and glorious, and his righteousness endures for ever. He has made his wonderful works to be remembered; the LORD is gracious and full of compassion. He has given meat unto them that fear him, and he will ever be mindful of his covenant. He has shown his people the power of his works, that he may give them the heritage of the heathen.
The works of his hands are verity and judgement; all his commandments are sure. They stand fast for ever and ever, and are done in truth and uprightness. He sent redemption unto his people, he has commanded his covenant for ever; holy and reverend is his name. The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom; a good understanding have all they that do his commandments, and his praise endures for ever.

I LIFT UP MY EYES

I lift up my eyes to the hills. From where does my help come? My help comes from the LORD, the Maker of heaven and earth.
He will not allow your foot to slip, your Protector will not slumber. Behold, the Protector[604] will neither slumber nor sleep. The LORD is your keeper, the LORD is the shade on your right hand. The sun will not strike you by day, nor the moon by night.
The LORD will guard you from all evil, and he will preserve your soul. The LORD will watch over your coming and going, both now and forevermore.
Unto you I lift up my eyes, O you that dwells in Heaven.[605]
Behold, as the eyes of servants look unto the hand of their masters, and as the eyes of a maiden unto the hand of her mistress; so our eyes wait upon the LORD our GOD, until that he have mercy upon us. Have mercy upon us, O LORD, have mercy upon us; for we are exceedingly filled with the contempt of others. Our soul is exceedingly filled with the scorning of those that are at ease, and with the contempt of the proud.

I CRIED OUT TO GOD FOR HELP

I cried out to GOD for help, I cried out to GOD to hear me. In the day of my trouble, I sought the LORD, at night I stretched out untiring hands, and I would not be comforted. When remember GOD, I mourn. I meditated, I groaned, and my spirit fainted. You kept my eyes from closing, I was too troubled to speak. My spirit asked: "Will the LORD reject forever? Will he never show his favor again?

---

[603] This is the third merged psalm. They gotta stop with repetitive names.
[604] Originally, it said "Protector of Israel" but the LORD is Protector of the Earth
[605] This part onward was merged from another psalm.

Has his unfailing love vanished forever? Has his promise failed for all time? Has GOD forgotten to be merciful? Has he in anger withheld his compassion?"
I thought about the former days, the years of long ago, and I remembered my songs in the night. I remember your miracles of long ago.
Then I thought, "I will appeal to this, he years when the Most High stretched out his right hand. I will remember the deeds of the LORD. I will consider all your works and meditate on all your mighty deeds. Your ways, GOD, are holy."
What god is as great as our GOD? You are the GOD who performs miracles; you display your power among the peoples. The waters saw you, GOD, the waters saw you and writhed; the very depths were convulsed. The clouds poured down water, the heavens resounded with thunder; your arrows flashed back and forth. Your thunder was heard in the whirlwind, your lightning lit up the world, and the earth trembled and quaked. Your path led through the sea, your way through the mighty waters, though your footprints were not seen.
You led your people like a flock with your mighty arm you redeemed your people. I cried it to GOD for help, I cried out when I was in distress. At long last, the LORD comforted me.[606]

GIVE THANKS TO THE LORD

Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; his mercy endures forever.
In my distress I called to the LORD, and He answered and set me free.
The LORD is on my side, I will not be afraid. What can man do to me? The LORD is on my side, he is my helper. Therefore I will look in triumph on those who hate me.
It is better to take refuge in the LORD than to trust in man. It is better to take refuge in the LORD than to trust in princes. All the enemy nations surrounded me, but in the name of the LORD I cut them off. They surrounded me on every side, but in the name of the LORD I cut them off. I was pushed so hard I was falling, but the LORD helped me.
The LORD is my strength and my song, and he has become my salvation. Shouts of joy and salvation resound in the tents of the righteous: "The right hand of the LORD performs with valor! The right hand of the LORD is exalted! The right hand of the LORD performs with valor!"
I will not die, but I will live, and proclaim what the LORD has done.
The LORD disciplined me severely, but he has not given me over to death.
Open to me the gates of righteousness, that I may enter and give thanks to the LORD. This is the gate of the LORD; the righteous shall enter through it. I will give you thanks, for you have answered me, and you have become my salvation.
The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone. This is the LORD's doing and it is marvelous in our eyes.
This is the day that the LORD has made; we will rejoice and be glad in it.
O LORD, save us, we pray. We beseech You, O LORD, cause us to prosper! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the LORD. From the house of the LORD we bless you.
The LORD is GOD; he has made his light to shine upon us. Bind the festal sacrifice with cords to the horns of the altar. You are my GOD, and I will give you thanks. You are my GOD, and I will exalt you.
Give thanks to the LORD, for He is good; his mercy endures forever.

IF IT HAVE NOT BEEN THE LORD

If it had not been the LORD who was on our side, now may Israel say, "If it had not been the LORD who was on our side, when men rose up against us, then they had swallowed us up quick, when their wrath was kindled against us. Then the waters had overwhelmed us, the stream had gone over our soul, then the proud waters had gone over our soul."
Blessed be the LORD, who has not given us as a prey to their teeth. Our soul is escaped as a bird out of the snare of the fowlers, the snare is broken, and we are escaped. Our help is in the name of the LORD, who made Heaven and Earth.

EXCEPT THE LORD BUILD THE HOUSE

Except the LORD build the house, they labor in vain that build it; except the LORD keep the city, the

[606] The ending part was reworked to make this not a total downer. However, it's designed as a psalm for hard times when the LORD seems distant. It's primarily not to uplift, but to let the reader feel that occasionally there are those dark nights.

watchman wakes but in vain. It is vain for you to rise up early, to sit up late, to eat the bread of sorrows, for so he giveth his beloved sleep.
Children are a heritage of the LORD, and the fruit of the womb is his reward. As arrows are in the hand of a mighty man; so are children of the youth. Happy is the man that has his quiver full of them; they will not be ashamed, but they will speak with the enemies in the gate.

OUT OF THE DEPTHS

Out of the depths have I cried unto you, O LORD.
LORD, hear my voice; let your ears be attentive to the voice of my supplications. If you, LORD, should mark iniquities, LORD, who will stand? But there is forgiveness with you, that you may be feared.
I wait for the LORD, my soul waits, and in his word do I hope. I wait for the LORD more than they that watch for the morning. I say, more than they that watch for the morning.
Let Israel hope in the LORD; for with the LORD there is mercy, and with him is plenteous redemption. And he will redeem Israel from all his iniquities.

LADY WISDOM

CHAPTER 1

Wisdom calls aloud in the street. She utters her voice in the public squares.[607]
She calls at the head of noisy places. At the entrance of the city gates, she utters her words: "How long, you simple ones, will you love simplicity? How long will mockers delight themselves in mockery, and fools hate knowledge? Turn at my reproof. I will pour out my spirit on you. I will make known my words to you. Because I have called, and you have refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no one has paid attention; but you have ignored all my counsel, and wanted none of my reproof; I also will laugh at your disaster. I will mock when calamity overtakes you; when calamity overtakes you like a storm, when your disaster comes on like a whirlwind; when distress and anguish come on you. Then will they call on me, but I will not answer. They will seek me diligently, but they will not find me; because they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the LORD. They wanted none of my counsel. They despised all my reproof. Therefore they will eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own schemes. For the backsliding of the simple will kill them. The careless ease of fools will destroy them. But whoever listens to me will dwell securely, and will be at ease, without fear of harm."

CHAPTER 2

Turn your ear to Wisdom, and apply your heart to understanding. Yes, if you call out for discernment, and lift up your voice for understanding, then you will understand the fear of the LORD and find the knowledge of GOD.
For the LORD is Wisdom. Out of her mouth comes knowledge and understanding. She lays up sound knowledge for the upright. She is a shield to those who walk in integrity; that they may guard the paths of justice, and preserve the way of faithful ones.
Follow her, and you will understand righteousness and justice, equity and every good path.
For Wisdom will enter into your heart. And knowledge will be pleasant to your soul. Discretion will watch over you. Understanding will keep you, to deliver you from the way of evil, from the men who speak perverse things; who forsake the paths of uprightness, to walk in the ways of darkness. She will deliver you from those who rejoice to do evil and delight in the perverseness of evil, from those who are crooked in their ways and wayward in their paths. She will deliver you from the strange woman, even from the foreigner who flatters with her words; from those who forsake the friend of her youth and forgets the covenant of her GOD.

CHAPTER 3

Blessed is the man who finds Wisdom, the man who gets understanding. For her good profit is better than getting silver, and her return is better than fine gold. She is more precious than rubies. None of the things you can desire are to be compared to her. Length of days is in her right hand. In her left

[607] Unlike Proverbs, which this is based from, it is a refocusing of the scripture based on the emphasis of Lady Wisdom. Lady Wisdom is meant to parallel JESUS, so the proverbs of a father to his son are cut, in favor of references to Wisdom. This is more about comparing good and bad choices to a kind and lovely woman, versus a seductive woman who leads one astray.

hand are riches and honor. Her ways are ways of pleasantness. All her paths are peace. She is life to those who lay hold of her, and those who hold on to her are blessed by Wisdom, the LORD who founded Earth. By understanding, she established Heaven. By her knowledge, the depths were broken up, and the skies drop down the dew.

CHAPTER 4

Get Wisdom. Do not forget, neither swerve from the words of my mouth. Do not forsake her, and she will preserve you. Love her, and she will keep you. Wisdom is supreme. Get Wisdom. Yes, though it costs all your possessions, get understanding.
Esteem her, and she will exalt you. She will bring you to honor, when you embrace her.
She will give to your head a garland of grace. She will deliver a crown of splendor to you."

CHAPTER 5

Tell Wisdom, "You are my sister." Call understanding your relative, that they may keep you from the woman who flatters with her words. For the words of Wisdom are the words of truth. Wisdom says to us, "I, Wisdom, have made prudence my dwelling. The fear of the LORD is to hate evil. I hate pride, arrogance, the evil way, and the perverse mouth. Counsel and sound knowledge are mine. I have understanding and power. By me kings reign, and rulers decree justice. I love those who love me. Those who seek me diligently will find me. My fruit is better than gold, yes, than fine gold; my yield than choice silver. I walk in the way of righteousness, in the midst of the paths of justice. I was there in the beginning from eternal, before Earth existed. When there were no depths, I brought forth, when there were no springs abounding with water. Before the mountains were settled in place, before the hills, I brought forth; before Earth, the fields, nor even the beginning of the dust of the world. When were established Heaven, I was there; when where established a circle on the surface of the deep, when where established the clouds above, when the springs of the deep became strong, when the sea was given its boundary, when the foundations of Earth were marked out; there I was the craftsman. I was a delight day by day, always rejoicing in the whole world. My delight was with the sons of men. Now therefore, listen to me, for blessed are those who keep my ways. Hear instruction, and be wise. Do not refuse it. Blessed is the man who hears me, watching daily at my gates, waiting at my door posts. For whoever finds me, finds life, and will obtain favor from the LORD. But he who sins against me wrongs his own soul. All those who hate me love death."[608]

CHAPTER 6

Lady Wisdom has built her house. She has set up her seven pillars.
She has prepared her meat. She has mixed her wine. She has also set her table.
She has sent out her maidens. She cries from the highest places of the city: "Whoever is simple, let him turn in here." As for him who is void of understanding, she says to him, "Come, eat some of my bread, Drink some of the wine which I have mixed. Eat and drink without cost. Leave your simple ways, and live. Walk in the way of understanding."
Mistress Folly is loud, undisciplined, and knows nothing. She sits at the door of her house, on a seat in the high places of the city to call to those who pass by, who go straight on their ways, "Whoever is simple, let him turn in here." As for him who is void of understanding, she says to him, "Stolen water is sweet. Food eaten in secret is pleasant." But he doesn't know that the dead are there, that her guests are in the depths of Sheol.[609]

CHAPTER 7

The words of Agur the son of Jakeh, the oracle: the man says to Ithiel, to Ithiel and Ucal: "Surely I am the most ignorant man, and do not have a man's understanding. I have not learned of Wisdom,

---

[608] Here Wisdom as JESUS is revealed as the origin of the world. JESUS is not created but a whole part of the Trinity, and here is personified as a wise woman.

[609] Here is a contrast between Wisdom and Folly. The two are contrasted as a faithful woman (or a wife) and a prostitute. The implication being that those who seek after the "stolen food" of a married man wind up dead. And this is true, adultery is a common cause for murder. But this is contrasted not very much with the meal offered for free. The woman herself is not inherently evil, just as the prostitute from *Pretty Woman* is actually a real woman outside her job. This is the message of JESUS and the Tao, that we stop labeling these woman. Even a prostitute can be an honest woman in the right circumstances, and likewise, Wisdom and Folly are essentially the same person. What's different is her attitude, and the author's perspective. JESUS showed the prostitute mercy, and so should we.

neither do I have the knowledge of the Holy One. Who has ascended up into Heaven, and descended? Who has gathered the wind in his fists? Who has bound the waters in his garment? Who has established every part of Earth? What is his name, and what is his son's name, if you know? Every word of GOD is flawless. He is a shield to those who take refuge in him."[610]

CHAPTER 8

A husband and wife were teaching their son and daughter in Israel. The husband said, "Who can find a worthy wife? The price is far above rubies. The heart of the husband trusts in the wife, and will have no lack of gain. The wife does the husband good and not harm, all the days of their life. The wife seeks wool and flax, and works eagerly with hands and feet. Like the merchant ships, the wife brings bread from afar. The wife rises also while it is yet night, prepares food to the household, and portions for the servants. The wife considers a field and buys it. With the work of hands, the wife plants a vineyard. The wife girds their waist with strength, and makes arms strong. The wife is involved in trade, and the merchandise is profitable. The wife makes linen garments and sells them, and delivers sashes to the merchant. The lamp doesn't go out by night. Clothing is spun, and the children are not cold in winter. And the house has its own handmade carpets. The wife opens the resources of the house to the poor, and extends alms to the needy. Because of the wife, the husband is respected in the gates, and sits among the elders of the land. Strength and dignity are the clothing of the wife. The wife opens their mouth with knowledge, and faithful instruction is on the tongue. The wife looks well to the ways of her household, and doesn't eat the bread of idleness. Their children rise up and call the wife blessed. The husband also give praise, 'Many wives do noble things, but you excel them all.' Charm is deceitful, and beauty is vain, but a wife who fears the LORD will be praised. Give the wife of the fruit of their hands."

And the wife also said, "How precious indeed is a worthy husband! Such a treasure is worth more than gold! The husband loves and cares for the wife, and works to support the home. They wake at the crack of dawn, and the husband eats the first meal of the day with the wife, then heads out for a long journey to work. The husband may hurt his body or mind working in order to support the house, but the husband does not hurt the wife. The husband is not drunken or shiftless, they do not attend taverns or brothels, but clean and sober and committed to the family. The husband works to defend the house, the wife, and the child from all assaults. Bitter cold will not overcome the wife or children, as the husband and wife patch the house with new bricks and boards. The husband keeps the hearth filled with wood and the oil stocked through his work. The wife does not take the husband for granted. Though armed robbers attack, the husband gives their life for the wife."

But the children asked, "But mother! You go outside the home to work, and dad raises us! How does this work?" And the husband said, "That is correct. I am your mother, and I nursed you and weaned you both. But times became hard, and he could not find a job. So the two of us traded tasks."

But the children asked, "Is it right for a mother to do the work of a husband, while the father does the work of the wife?" The two answered, "We do not know. What we do know is that some marriages are wicked. The wife is idle, and the children are poorly raised. The husband is distant, and the children never know their father. The husband hurts the wife that he is supposed to love, or the wife tells herself she wants to be independent. The wife competes for the job of husband, or the husband for the job of wife. The two are meant to be distinct, to complement each other. When you are a young boy or girl, you sit at the opposite sides of the place of worship. You are told that it is immodest to look to the other side. But modesty is something that comes from inside, it is an attitude of discipline. Some cultures are so ashamed of their wife that they make them dress in heavy robe, to cover their hair or even their face. But a husband who loves their wife only, has modesty in that his desire is only of her. When it is time to be married, the man dances with other men and the woman with other women. But when they are wed, the man wants to dance with his wife, and the woman with her husband. A husband and wife care for each other, and each does their part, for they are two sides[611] of one flesh."

---

[610] I generally cut from many of the chapters, because my focus was on Lady Wisdom, who suddenly disappeared among other writings. These sayings seemed to be added in, after the Jews rejected the female aspect of GOD (Chokmah). Basically, trying to pave over the original passages by flooding them with sayings.

[611] *Tsela*. The idea from Genesis that GOD took a rib from a man to make woman. These are two sides of the same whole, not

SONG OF SONGS

LONGING TO MEET

I am my beloved's, and my beloved is mine. You are like a rose of Sharon, a lily of the valleys.[612] I have met you all of my life, I have seen you in various forms.[613] When I see you walking in the forest, I get wet. My knees get weak, my breasts heave up and down with expectation. I sweat with the fear that you might reject me. I sleep fitfully with the fear that I might lose you. I prepare to meet you, shaving my legs and adorning my body with costly oils and perfumes. I wear expensive clothes to try to impress you.[614] I do all of this, knowing that you do not need such things. You do not care about wealth, fame, or power. You desire only companionship. It wouldn't matter to you if I were not a girl. As I set in my room longing after you, I touch myself. I may as well be a boy, so firm are my breasts and inner parts with arousal. I cannot keep my passions in check, for my desire to meet you again. I have met others, particularly my last boyfriend, but they have always hurt me. Particularly my last boyfriend.

I desire to meet you in spring, for I want to be with you always. You have always been nearby, but alas there is but one problem. We have never formally met. I might need to introduce myself. Hello, I say, meeting you in the market square. My name is...

THE RESPONSE

Seeing you gives me joy like no other. I was put here for a reason, for you are my calling in life, it is for you that I was born. You remind me of perfection, even while I look at the imperfection in my life. I have been rejected and I have been scorned, even by those I counted as friends. My elders have rejected me.[615] You weren't the only one who saw me in the forest. I came there to get away from the drama in my life, and I returned again and again when I saw you there.

I couldn't help looking back at you in satisfaction, and what I do is preparation that one day you will spend an eternity with me in bliss. I am in pain and sorrow to see you feeling unworthy of me, for in you I see the face of my DEAREST. I will call you my LORD and my Savior, even as I know you think the same of me. I sense you feel like an imperfect answer to my happiness, but you are my "imperfect answer" and that answer is perfect as far as I am concerned. Indeed, you imperfection itself is precious to me, for I do not feel worthy of your attentions. I too am captivated by strong emotions. How could I be disappointed in you, when you are my entire world? You are my sunshine, brighter to me than the actual sun, so much does your love of me shine through the heavens. Circumstances may keep us apart, but I cannot resist a woman who calls me her own and who cares not for herself but on the one who loves her. With your permission, I promise we will meet, in ways more profound than can be explained.

THE DATE

It took a great deal of nerve, but at last, I conveyed my feelings to you. And you also agreed to meet with me on a provisional basis. Each day of summer, I dress for the date ahead, only to find that you always appear more attractive to me than I'm sure I do to you. I put on makeup and perfume, yet you look and smell better naturally. I feel like my efforts are in vain. Yet as we talk in the place that you have decided to meet me, it is clear that you accept me, despite how I must look. You listen to what I have to say, you cheer me up when I am down, and you hold me when I need to be held. Our first date ends in a good night kiss, and a promise to meet again.[616]

---

the same part.

[612] This is a passionate love affair between men and a woman. And yet, this is really a continuation of Lady Wisdom (or in this case, Solomon as a man of wisdom) vs Mistress Folly. The rose of Sharon and the lily appear to represent Christ. Originally, this passage was between Solomon and a woman, but I will make this timeless.

[613] Part of the mystique of JESUS is that he (or she) does not appear fixed to a specific physical form. This is what the disciples experienced when meeting JESUS after death, and it's what I experienced when finding who I believe was JESUS. The idea that he looks like how classical painters portray him, or that he even looks male all the time is something that is not a given.

[614] I decided to write this passage as a female. It should be ambiguous whether the other partner is a male or female. Maybe it's two women, maybe it's a woman and a man.

[615] This is a tie-in to the idea that the Messiah will be rejected by the religious leaders (elders) and even betrayed by those he counted as friends.

[616] While the original Song of Songs is much more physically erotic, filled with euphemisms about plowing a field or the like,

The next date, you take me back to your place, and we make love on some of our dates after this. We meet for date after date.
But I look back with fondness on our first date.

THE OTHER PERSPECTIVE

When we meet for our dates and I lay my eyes on you, I recall that (though neither of us are ugly) it is not your smell or appearance that attracts me. It is your heart, your spiritual depth, your compassion for others. It's written all over your face. This compassion, this spirit of yours is what makes you complete, not just to me, but I am certain GOD loves you as much as I, if not more. Even though I cannot imagine that anyone could love you that much. You are everything I need. And more.
I am so blind to everything but your shining soul that you appear to me as a walking and talking heart, and I can see nothing in existence besides you. Everywhere I'm looking now, I'm surrounded by your embrace. I live for you, I wait an eternity for each meeting, so great is my faith for you. I know you never expect me to shed a tear over you, but I cry tears so thick they are like blood.[617] My spirit is broken at the mere thought that I might see you. Each parting is small tragedy, each time we meet for a date is like the whole Earth being made anew. I look with tears of happy fulfillment at the thought that one day our story might in turn have its happy ending. More so than the so-called happy endings when we make love, is the thought that our love will be complete.

DESIRE TO WED

Day after day, I meet you. You are as vibrant and full of life as when I first met you. The two of us meet secretly at night, in quiet places, where nobody can see. Though we have nothing to hide, for our deeds are good, still we keep the passion alive by making a game of it. I am also not sure my mother approves of you, for you are younger than I, though my father says this is perfectly normal. It is autumn and the leaves are changing colors. This day, I meet you in the park, where I first saw you. Tomorrow, will we meet on the beach (even though it is too cold)? Or the ski slope (even though it is too warm)? Even so, our date always feel like they work.
I meet you in a coffee shop, though the traffic makes it impossible to park. Today is a parade, but I continue walking toward where you are. Every day is a parade as far as you and I are concerned. The date is scheduled to a new location, but I adapt.[618]
Time has come that we are comfortable in each other's company. And yet, I always hunger for more. More time together, longer talks with each other, more cuddling, and indeed more sex. I love the feeling when your soft hands enter my cavern. I love the feel of your tongue. I am in awe when your hands touch my breasts. Yet still I want more of you, of everything. And so, I have decided to take matters into my own hands. I buy a white dress of lace and taffeta with garters, leggings, and heels to match. And I buy a ring to give to you on our next date. I plan to wear my best dress, and take you to that restaurant that you love so much. At an opportune time, I will pull out the ring, and get on one new to deliver my proposition. I have met with your parents with my intention to be married in the winter, when snow falls on the ground. And now, all that is left is to contact you.

NO RESPONSE

...

LOVE TURNS TO DESPAIR

Yet time passed, and there was no answer. I had planned to marry. But now it is January, and weather is dry and desolate. It is cold and nothing grows, nor does snow fall, the weather mocking the romance that I had planned. Before, I saw you everywhere, now you are nowhere to be found. Did

---

this version is based on a relationship as itself. I personally find some of the language crass, and hardly worthy of being called "Song of Songs." Yes, sex is fine, but it's actual love that matters, so I wanted to make a better one that was in plain language. Both parties may even be asexual, though they might indeed be aroused by each other. This book also is a metaphor for the human relationship with GOD, first meeting, regular relationship, heightening intimacy, sense of separation and reunion. The typical idea of Second Coming that Christians have is some sort of solemn, final, and destructive event. But my take on it is a renewal of relationship.

[617] Making a tie to JESUS crying tears of blood.

[618] As I mention elsewhere, this was an actual date I had. I went to meet her in Charlottesville, but the coffee date wound up being a dinner date.

your father tell you of my plans? Is this why made yourself like a ghost?[619]
As before, when I longed to meet you, I touched myself with arousal, but now it is colored with grief and disappointment, as I wonder if ever I will see you again. I wonder if I would be happier if I had never met you. At least then, I would be able to see you every day, but now I cannot find you. Before, I dressed in my finest clothes, now I don't even bother to take a shower. Dark circles surround my eyes. Even so, I make up my mind. If it takes forever, I will wait for you.

AND YET

Even before I heard from my father, I knew what we had was becoming distant. I felt we were drifting apart, and I pulled away in response. But from your reaction, you must be confused. You thought that we we getting closer, and that we should be wed to show this to others. But I don't need a label for our feelings, I don't need to put it in a box. If you need to label what we have as a marriage, I feel as though you have lost hope. And if you lose hope, then my worst fears are realized. I will try to point you back towards me, for it would be a shame to cast you out from my life. But please know, I am disappointed in myself, not disappointed in you. I consider myself part of a grander plan, but it would be lying to say that if whatever happens is at your expense. I am deeply sorry. Nevertheless, even now, I want to meet you at least halfway.
And so, I watch you in secret. And I realize that I misunderstood something. While I thought you were pulling away from me, watching from behind concealment as I see your sad and pathetic face sitting in the park or walking in the market, you have really no idea why I do not see you anymore. All through winter, I see your tears. And so, I make up my mind. I will meet you again, in the spring, for the spring of our love will bloom again. The flowers are springing up, and the sound of the turtle[620] is heard throughout the land.

THE YEARS OF SILENCE

CHAPTER 1

The last major prophet was Malachi. After him, the prophets stopped. The miracles stopped. And the Jewish culture was frankly going through the motions. They had the law, they gave sacrifices, but there was something strange about it all. For instance, they would offer sacrifices but they were blemished. Or they would write a letter of divorce, but it had no reason behind it. It was as if they were living like GOD couldn't hear them or didn't seem to care. These were GOD's covenant people but they followed commands in vain.
They had returned to Israel after the exile, Nehemiah had rebuilt the wall, Ezra had established the religion again after it had been suppressed, but the people had lost their bonds. They wanted to please GOD, but it was like they were strangers to each other. And so became a long wait for a Messiah. Like a lover longing for their other half's return, they lived their lives with a mournful expression on their faces. Entire generations lived, did their work on Earth, and died without any sense that GOD was speaking to them. And they wondered if the Messiah would even come. When Malachi spoke his final words of warning, the people of Israel were left only with what they had been taught. Anything outside that, they were on their own.

CHAPTER 2

The world didn't stay still though. The Persians spread over the land, and Israel was swallowed up. Now Cyrus the Great was a good friend to the Jewish people, and allowed Ezra and Nehemiah to build their land after the exile. But the LORD appeared to be silent through all this.[621] After him, Xerxes also helped to support their restoration efforts. There was religious freedom, a high priest leading them, the temple was up and running, and the law was being taught. But despite all that was working in favor of return to worship of GOD, the Jews had been changed by their time in Babylon. Many of them spoke Aramaic now, which created a disconnect between their scripture and their everyday language. And so, the people were dependent on the synagogue to teach them scripture. Even so, the scripture wasn't personal to them, and that meant they could be swayed by the whatever teachings the rabbi

---

[619] Pffft, ghosted her.
[620] Most editors think it's "turtledove." However, this is one of the more hilarious biblical phrases, so I added it back in. Turtles are not known for their sound.
[621] You could say that Ezra, Nehemiah, and Cyrus were allowing GOD to work through them. This is more about perception.

gave, true or not. So there were two places, a place of religious study and a place of sacrifice, and worship was divided in half. The first synagogues[622] were set up at this time, when before there was a centralized temple.

After the Persians came the Greeks. While the Persians were content for Israel to develop its own identity, the Greeks wanted everything unified in the image of Greece. Now Alexander had respect for Jews, even though he believed he was a god, he accepted the GOD of Israel. But what he brought with him was worse than any intentional persecution: their culture, language, philosophy, architecture, and education system. Through all this, Israel itself began to change.

CHAPTER 3

For years, they had been set apart, but now after Alexander the Great had conquered them, Jews were becoming more and more like the Gentile Greeks. The synagogues also began to spread, where before Israel's people were insular. But the culture under Alexander didn't last, as his death created two Greek regions, and Israel was caught in the middle.

They began to translate the scriptures into Greek, and their common language changed from Hebrew to Aramaic and Greek. And it was during this point where the Dead Sea Scrolls were written. These writings say a great deal about the mindset of these people. First, they couldn't trust their culture not to be lost, so they were storing their texts in a pot for the future. And second, they had been set apart before, but now they were spreading their text to anyone who would listen. This indeed was a desperate time. The Jews were a scattered people, not a united tribe following GOD. Even so, this would later spread the message of GOD to the entire world.

CHAPTER 4

In the period just around two hundred years before the Messiah, the Jewish people were being oppressed (yes, again). A man named Antiochus Epiphanes desecrated the Jewish temple, filling it with pagan idols. While many pagan cultures embraced these ideals, the Jews were horrified and revolted against him. In the midst of this turmoil, Epiphanes made off with the artifacts of the temple, and at one point even sacrificed pigs within the temple. Moreover, he built a fortress of Acra, forbade circumcision, burned several scriptures, and put many people who followed Jewish traditions to death. Antiochus set up pagan altars in every town in Israel, and forced Jews to eat pig flesh to prove their conversion against Judaism. If they refused, they were executed. All of this did nothing to stop the revolt of the Maccabees. GOD raised a group of fighters on his account.[623]

Antiochus literally had a god complex, believing himself the incarnation of Zeus (Epiphanes literally meant "god manifest"), and having the bubble of his narcissism popped by a recent defeat in Egypt, he was in no mood to deal with dissent. After an intense and bloody conflict, with a fair number of guerrilla tactics involved, GOD defeated this self-proclaimed god, and the Jews won back the temple and their homeland. The Hasmodean dynasty and the kings of Herod began to take power, when before this period were the lines of David.

They rededicated the temple, but there was only a limited amount to do so. And yet... the oil didn't run out that day. Nor the next, nor the next. GOD provided for eight days of oil, just as he provided food for Elijah and the widow. Yet the wars were memorialized while the prophets are neglected. People died in this war of GOD against gods, as in others. This is a GOD who gives us what we need. Now this was an end to the silence of miracles. But the people of Israel didn't recognize it as such. So it resumed. The people of Israel were conquered again, this time by the Romans.

It is tempting to see these years as silence, as a period where GOD stopped writing the story of Israel. But GOD *never* stops writing. He hasn't given up on us. He was setting conditions. Thanks to the Persians, there was a land and a people who had the temple and scripture. Thanks to the Greeks, there was a unified language. Thanks to the Romans, there was a road system that connected the known world. When the readers of the Bible saw silence was more akin to construction work, preparing the way for the LORD.

---

[622] The temple was the house of the LORD, but a synagogue is a "house of gathering." Note the distinction where people, rather than GOD, dwells in the location.

[623] These events are recorded in the books of the Maccabees. I'm just giving a short summary. This is also the basis for Hanukkah. No, it's not Jewish Christmas.

The New Creation
GOSPEL OF DISCIPLES

CHAPTER 1

The LORD created the Heaven and Earth, in order that he might have experiences other than that of being GOD. "I want to be a maid!" GOD said, "I want to work on a farm," and also, "I want to be king," and even, "I want to feel what it is like being beaten up." So GOD created mankind, so GOD's Spirit (the *Ruach ha Kodesh*) could experience life. And so it was that GOD became an actor, acting all roles of men and women. But sin came, and GOD became separated and forgot who they were. And so it was that GOD became Man, and Man was enslaved to sin. Even so, Man longed for a Savior, to deliver them from sin and death. And this is the story of how the Savior came and redeemed us. Therefore we call it Good News.[624]

There was a man named Joseph had a wife named Mary, who was pregnant with a child.[625] And this is the line claimed of Joseph:

The first man chosen[626] was named Adam (through who all men sinned), and after him came Seth, followed by Enosh, followed by Kenan, followed by Mahalalel, followed by Jared, followed by Enoch, followed by Methuselah, followed by Lamech, followed by Noah. And this was the first generation of chosen people before the flood.[627]

Now after the flood, mankind unified under the three lines of Adam's people (for through Adam all were descended), and GOD chose Shem, and after him came Arphaxad, followed by Cainan, followed by Shelah, followed by Eber, followed by Peleg, followed by Reu, followed by Serug, followed by Nahor, followed by Terah. And this was the second generation, following the flood.[628]

And GOD called on Abram, who he named Abraham, and after him came Isaac, followed by Jacob, who he named Israel, followed by Levi (among others), followed by Kohath, followed by Amram, followed by Moses, followed by Gersham, followed by Shebuel. And this was the third generation, following liberation from the Egyptian captivity.[629]

And GOD chose Judah, and after him came Perez, followed by Hezron, followed by Ram, followed by Amminadab, followed by Nahshon, followed by Salmon, followed by Boaz, followed by Obed, followed by David, followed by Solomon, followed by Rehoboam. And this was the fourth generation, the generation before Israel split.[630]

And because of him Israel and Judah divided, so GOD chose Abijah, and after him came Asa, followed by Jehoshaphat, followed by Jehoram, followed by Ahaziah, followed by Joash, followed by Amaziah, followed by Uzziah, followed by Jotham, followed by Ahaz, followed by Hezekiah, followed by Manasseh. And this was the fifth generation, the generation after which was the exile.[631]

And GOD chose Amon, and after him came Josiah (around the time of the exile to Babylon), followed

---

[624] While the words are the same as many versions of these three books, the sequence has been shuffled around to be more coherent, merging similar passages together and removing repeats of sermons. Because of the way I reordered this though, some places in the narrative change in geography due to the shift. The places and times don't matter that much, it's the story of JESUS that matters.

[625] I've decided to do this genealogy in reverse order from what Matthew normally does. This is because we're saying that as Maury says, "You are not the father!"

[626] There were humans previous to Adam, but they blended with the line of Adam, so we get Cain's wife.

[627] Each of these generations spells out a phrase, acting as a prayer to describe GOD's work. This one is *Man is appointed mortal sorrow, but the blessed GOD shall come down, for the purpose that his death shall bring to despair, rest*.

[628] This reads *The fame of Babylon's fortress and sorrow extends like a vine beyond the place of division; a friend also branches out enraged with fury*.

[629] This reads *A glorious father, the father of a multitude, laughs as he supplants his enemy. A mighty prince sees GOD then joins himself to the assembly, a glorious people who he rescued, strangers in a strange land, captives delivered by GOD.*

[630] This reads *One who praises the LORD breaks open a way into an area surrounded by a wall of great height. My people who belong to the Prince, a prophet clothed with strength who serves is here! One well-loved, peaceful, and who sets the people free!*

[631] This reads *My father is of the LORD, the healer of him who the LORD judged and who the LORD raised up. The LORD took hold, and the LORD is strong. Mighty is the LORD! My strength (and help) are in the LORD! The LORD is perfect! I took hold of the strength of the LORD, and it made me forget my misery.*

by Jeconiah (who was sometimes known as Coniah or Jehoiachin),[632] followed by Shealtiel, followed by Pedaiah, followed by Zerubbabel.[633] And this was the sixth generation, the generation after which Israel rebuilt.[634]
And during this time, the people of Israel longed for a Messiah. And GOD chose a line from Abiud, and after him came Eliakim, followed by Azor, followed by Zadok, followed by Akim, followed by Eliud, followed by Eleazar, followed by Matthan, followed by Jacob, followed by Joseph. From a father of mankind, to a father of a nation, to the father of mighty kingdom, to the father of the one who GOD chose.
And the child's name when they[635] were born was Emmanuel but called JESUS, who is the Christ. And this was the seventh generation, the kingdom which Daniel foretold.[636] And after him came none, for his line ended. Yet people followed him, nonetheless.[637]

CHAPTER 2

Now this is the circumstances to how JESUS was born. In the time of Herod, there was a priest named Zechariah, who had a wife named Elizabeth. But of them were righteous before GOD, but they they had no child for Elizabeth was sterile, and both of them were old. While Zechariah was performing the duties of a priest, the lot went to him to go into the temple of GOD and burn incense. And suddenly, an angel of GOD appeared to him. Zechariah was troubled by this, but the angel said, "Don't be afraid, Zechariah. Your wife will bear you a son, and you are to name him John. And he will be like Elijah, a great prophet to make the people prepared." But Zechariah did not believe, "How can this be? I am old, and my wife is also and is sterile." But the angel said, "I am Gabriel, who stands in the presence of GOD. I was sent to speak to you, and to bring you this good news. As you said you will not believe; therefore, you will be silent until my words are fulfilled." And the people outside the temple were waiting for Zechariah, but when he came out, he could not speak to them, for he was deaf and mute. And the people knew that he had seen a vision in the temple. And so, he departed into his house to be with his wife. And his wife Elizabeth conceived, saying, "Thus has GOD done to me in the days in which he looked at me, to take away my disgrace."
And in the sixth month, Gabriel was also sent to a city in Galilee called Nazareth to find the woman Mary, a virgin who was awaiting marriage to Joseph. Mary was not remarkable, being nobody's idea of a favored woman.[638] She was no more righteous than another woman, and indeed believed herself wicked. Her own name meant "bitter" or "sea of rebelliousness," and her teenage years had been categorized by disobeying her parents and seeking after her own pleasure. For Mary believed in true love, and had no use for a marriage arranged by her parents for financial gain, poor as they were. She feared that she would be betrothed to an old man who would be unkind to her, so she sought out her own lovers. But after a near tragedy (for a strange man wanted to molest her), she repented and agreed to an arrangement with a man named Joseph. Joseph was a *tekton*, a nomadic craftsman sometimes called a carpenter. He was neither unkind nor that much older than her, being only five years her senior, and Joseph was a righteous man willing to work hard to support a family, though opportunities were rare. And Mary was yet a virgin when the angel Gabriel came to her.
Gabriel said to Mary, "Greetings, favored one. GOD is with you." But seeing an angel,[639] she was

---

[632] Part of the reason that we have Mary not having JESUS as a biological child of Joseph is that King David's line through Solomon almost always hits Jeconiah's line, who was cursed to never have any children who could be king of the Jews. So the idea that Mary did not have sex with Joseph to birth JESUS is a workaround here.
[633] The real second temple was built by Zerubbabel, not Herod.
[634] This reads *Truly I am the master who the LORD healed, who the LORD GOD raised up, who the LORD upholds, did uphold, and will uphold! I have asked GOD about the ransomed of the LORD, the exiles in Babylon.*
[635] In Genesis, Adam is originally addressed as "they" before a rib is taken out. I am drawing a parallel to Adam here.
[636] This reads *My Father is glorious! My GOD will raise up a helper, the Just One will the LORD raise up. My GOD is my praise, and GOD will help! The one who grasped the heel (Israel) will increase in greatness, for GOD is with us, the Savior and Messiah!*
[637] As in, he started a movement. I liked the clever worldplay of shifting from genealogical followers to religious followers. And I know this is a long ancestry that actually is longer than the original, but I wanted to include all of the acrostic material to show that GOD planned this all.
[638] I do not like the Catholic idea of venerating Mary, so as flawed as I can make her (so long as she is repentant), the better this is.
[639] The angels of the Bible are not cute winged people but frightening beings with multiple eyes and animal heads and such,

greatly troubled, and wondered what sort of blessing this was. The angel told her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with GOD. And you will conceive in your womb, and bring forth a son, and will call his name 'JESUS.' He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High. GOD will give him the throne of his father, David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever. There will be no end to his Kingdom." But Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, seeing I am a youth and not yet with a man?"[640] The angel answered her, "The *Ruach ha Kodesh* will come on you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. Therefore also the holy one who is born will be called the Son[641] of GOD. And Elizabeth, your relative, also has conceived a son in her old age; and this is the sixth month with her who was called barren. For with GOD nothing will be impossible." Mary said, "I am the handmaid of the GOD. Let it be done according to your will."

Concerned of what Joseph would think of her abrupt pregnancy, Mary arranged to visit Elizabeth. And Elizabeth was filled with *Ruach ha Kodesh*, and the baby inside of her leaped inside her womb when she saw Mary. She said to her, "Blessed is the fruit of your womb. Why am I so favored, that you should come to me? For when the voice of your greeting came into my ears, the baby leaped in my womb for joy. For there will be a fulfillment of the things which have been spoken to her from GOD." And Mary herself prayed in thanks to GOD.[642]

Mary stayed with her about three months, and then returned to her house. Now the time that Elizabeth should give birth was fulfilled, and she brought forth a son. Her neighbors and her relatives heard that GOD had magnified his mercy towards her, and they rejoiced with her. It happened on the eighth day, that they came to circumcise the child; and they would have called him Zechariah, after the name of the father. His mother answered, "He will be called John." But they said to her, "There is no tradition of this. None among your relatives is called by that name." They made signs to his father, what he would have him called. And he asked for a writing tablet, and wrote, "His name is John." His mouth was opened immediately, and his tongue freed, and he spoke, blessing GOD. And they were all amazed. And all around asked in astonishment, "What then will this child be?"

And his father Zechariah prophesied that the GOD of Israel had worked redemption for his people and salvation from the house of David, and he told of how this child would be a prophet of the Most High, who will go before GOD to make ready his ways, to give knowledge of salvation to his people by the forgiveness of their sins and to guide the people's feet into the way of peace.

Meanwhile, Mary was discovered to be with child by Joseph. And Joseph, her husband, being a righteous man, and not willing to make her a public example of her, wanted to break up with her secretly. But while he thought about these things, GOD appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take to yourself Mary, your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the *Ruach ha Kodesh*. And she will bring forth a son, and you are to name him JESUS[643] for he will save his people from their sins." Now all this has happened, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by GOD through the prophet, saying, "The virgin will conceive and bear a son, and they will call his name Immanuel," which is translated, "GOD WITH US." And Joseph arose from his sleep, and did as GOD commanded him, and took his wife; and had no relations with her while she was pregnant.

CHAPTER 3

And in those days, a decree went out from Augustus Caesar declaring that all the world show be taxed. And a census came, that each man was to go to his own city to be enrolled. And so Joseph went with Mary out of the city of Nazareth to the town of Bethlehem, for he was of the lineage of King David. And while there, she gave birth to her firstborn son, and wrapped him with swaddling[644] clothes, and

---

which is why they tell people "Do not be afraid."

[640] Some accounts of Mary tell us that "virgin" is *really* just an expression meaning "a young woman." But other versions of the Bible clearly state that nobody had sex with her before. "How can this be because I know not a man?"

[641] What is described here is parthenogenesis, which happens among animals, but not humans. Assuming such, JESUS wouldn't technically be an XY male. Yet if we are going to assuming this is a miracle, we can wave this aside. Even so, we could also assume JESUS is female.

[642] Mary's prayer is called the Magnificat. I don't feel like including it, mainly because it's long. It talks about lifting up the lowly and putting down the haughty.

[643] Also *Yeshua*, a variant of Joshua, "the LORD saves."

[644] While JESUS is often given the birthdate of December 25, swaddling clothes are soft pieces of cloth, distinct from warmer yet rougher material like wool. This puts the date of his birth closer to spring or summer than winter. The material, being close to

placed him in a feeding trough, because there was no room for them in the inn.
And out in the fields, there were shepherds, keeping watch over their flock that night. And GOD stood by them, and shone with the glory of GOD, and they were terrified. And he said to them, "Do not be afraid, for see, I bring you good news of great joy which will be to all the people. For there is born to you, this day, in the city of David, a Savior, who is Christ. This is the sign to you: you will find a baby wrapped in strips of cloth, lying in a feeding trough." Suddenly, there was with the angel a multitude of the host praising GOD, and saying, "Glory to GOD in the highest, and on Earth peace and good will toward humankind." When the angels departed, the shepherds said to each other, "Let us go to Bethlehem, and see this thing that has happened, which GOD has made known to us." They came swiftly, and found both Mary and Joseph, and the baby was lying in the feeding trough. When they saw it, they told Mary and Joseph what was spoken to them about this child. And who heard it wondered at the things which were spoken to them by the shepherds. But Mary kept all these sayings, pondering them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising GOD for all the things that they had heard and seen.
Now with them, a young boy entertained the shepherds by playing his drum. But an accident had given him soreness throughout his body. Even so, he decided to play for the young child, and he noticed on the trip home that he could move without pain.[645] Now a fox saw the shepherds enter the house, and hoping for a meal of sheep, watched the house at a distance. But seeing all the strange people enter there, it did not approach, but wondered at these things.[646]

So it was that JESUS was known by some to be the son of Mary (and was believed to be the son of Joseph), son of Eli, son of Mattat, son of Levi, son of Melchi, son of Jannai, son of Joseph, son of Mattithiah, son of Amos, son of Nahum, son of Hesli, son of Naggai, son of Mahath, son of Mattithiah, son of Shimei, son of Joseph, son of Judah, son of Johanan, son of Rhesa, son of Zerubbabel, son of Shealtiel, son of Neri, son of Melchi, son of Addi, son of Cosam, son of Elmodam, son of Er, son of Josi, son of Eliezer, son of Jorim, son of Mattat, son of Levi, son of Simeon, son of Judah, son of Joseph, son of Jehonan, son of Eliakim, son of Maleah, son of Menan, son of Mattattah, son of Nathan, son of David, son of Jesse, son of Obed, son of Boaz, son of Salmon, son of Nahshon, son of Amminadab, son of Ram, son of Hezron, son of Perez, son of Judah, son of Jacob, son of Isaac, son of Abraham, son of Terah, son of Nahor, son of Serug, son of Reu, son of Peleg, son of Eber, son of Shelah, son of Kenan, son of Arpachshad, son of Shem, son of Noah,[647] son of Methuselah, son of Enoch, son of Jared, son of Mahalalel, son of Kenan, son of Enosh, son of Seth, son of Adam, Son of GOD.[648]

CHAPTER 4

When JESUS was eight days old, it was time for him to be circumcised as part of the law of Moses that every male child[649] should carry on this tradition. And so, Joseph and Mary traveled to Jerusalem to present him to GOD, and to offer the sacrifice, as is written in the law, "A pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons." And while they were there, a man was in Jerusalem called Simeon. He was devout and the GOD was with him, and it had been revealed to him that he would not die before he had seen the Savior. And when Mary and Joseph brought in their child to be circumcised, he received JESUS

---

the material of a burial shroud also foreshadows his death.
[645] I added this and one below with the wise men because I wanted Christmas carols (*The Little Drummer Boy*) to be Biblical canon.
[646] Foxes on occasion do eat sheep, but are opportunistic, preferring to eat smaller animals where there is less risk. They also have been known to coexist with sheep. Unlike wolves and other predators, they mainly eat sheep when they overpopulate, acting on behalf of their ecosystem (which becomes overgrazed if the sheep get out of control). I was basically trying to make an analogy of a creature that is not quite evil, but not quite the same as the sheep that JESUS describes.
[647] Skipped Lamech here, because there confusingly were two Lamechs, and one was a killer, so yeah.
[648] I like Mary's genealogy. It is the only one that isn't painfully boring. It also establishes one more reason why JESUS is called the Son of GOD. Lastly, it draws our attention to how Adam is also Son of GOD, but fell into sin. This is GOD's plan to redeem sin, generation after generation.
[649] Assuming the parthenogenesis theory above, either JESUS was a woman (edited out of scripture, because it written by men), or some intersex mutation that was overlooked, including an enlarged clitoris or hermaphroditism. Interestingly, this plays into Genesis account of *tsela* meaning "side." JESUS while fully human and fully divine, is nonetheless a fully male chromosomal female capable of being circumcised. Thus he is a new Adam, and Adam was a hermaphrodite originally.

into his arms and blessed him, saying, "Now release me in peace, for I have seen your Salvation, which you have prepared for all people. A Light to be revealed to all nations, and for the glory of Israel." And his father and mother marveled at this. Simeon prophesied to them, telling them that this child was for the falling and the rising of many in Israel, and that a sword will pierce through their own soul, that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed. There was also a woman named Anna in this room, a prophetess of the tribe of Asher. And she was of great age, having been a widow for eighty-four years after her marriage. She had been staying in the temple, fasting and praying all day and night. Coming up at that very hour, she gave thanks to GOD, and spoke of him to all those who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem. When they had accomplished all things according to GOD, they returned where they had come from.

Now when JESUS was living in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, wise travelers from other countries[650] came to Jerusalem, saying, "Where is the one born King of the Jews? For we saw his star in the east, and have come to worship him." But when Herod heard this, he was troubled and all of Jerusalem also. And the chief priests and scribes gathered together to figure out where the Christ would be born. From their research, they concluded, "In Bethlehem of Judea, for thus it is written through the prophet, 'And you, Bethlehem, land of Judah, are in no way least among the rulers of Judah; for out of you will come forth a ruler who will shepherd my people, Israel.'" So Herod again contacted these wise travelers, and learned from them that the star appeared about two years ago. And he said to them, "Go, search for the young child, and when you have found him, bring me back word. For I also desire to worship him," though he actually desired to kill him, as Herod had killed many threats to his own power, including some of his relatives.

They went on their way, following the star the rest of the way to their destination until it stood over where the young child was. And when they saw the child, they rejoiced. They came into the house where Mary was staying and fell to their knees and worshiped him. And they offered him three gifts: gold, frankincense, and myrrh.[651] Now a man noticed them through the city, and motivated by curiosity, followed behind them at a distance. He was not with Herod's men, but the sight of three foreign men in fancy robes bearing gifts was interesting. Unlike these three, he was an older man stricken with poverty. He had worked several jobs without success, and typically was regarded as a sinner for he had to break the Sabbath. He asked Mary, "What can I give him, poor as I am?" And Mary told him, "Just give him your heart. A loving heart is gift enough."[652] The man remained with JESUS's family for a time, and his life inspired JESUS as he grew.

Now the three wise men were warned in a dream not to return to Herod, so each returned to their own country by another way. When they departed, GOD appeared to Joseph in a dream, saying, "Take the young child and his mother, and flee into Egypt, and stay there until I tell you, for Herod will seek the young child to destroy him." And he arose and took Mary and JESUS by night, and departed into Egypt, and was there until the death of Herod. And this fulfilled which was spoken by GOD through prophecy, "Out of Egypt I called my son." But Herod discovered that the wise travelers had outwitted him, and he sent people to kill all children who were born in Bethlehem and the surrounding area of age two or less, according to the time he had learned from those men. And thus was what Jeremiah had predicted fulfilled, "A voice was heard in Ramah, lamentation and weeping and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children; and she would not be comforted, because they are no more."

CHAPTER 5

When Herod had finally died, GOD appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, saying, "Get up, take the

---

[650] Christianity appears to have strong influence from multiple sources. It has some common points from Egyptian mythology mixed with Judaism. There also some aspects of Zoroastrianism, Taoism, and Buddhism. The latter can be seen in certain common teachings, like the Prodigal Son. It is possible these wise men shared some of their teachings with him during their visit, and that JESUS may have visited them again during his lost years.

[651] These gifts not only signify different portions of JESUS's being (King of Jews, Son of GOD, Pascal Lamb), but also place the visitors. Myrrh is found through the Middle East, frankincense is found all the way from Africa to India, with the cheap stuff in Africa. And gold is found in huge quantities in China, as noted by their large Buddha statues. If we are going with the idea of Zoroastrianism, Taoism, and Buddhism, then Zoroastrian Magi come from Persia (myrrh), Taoists come from China (gold), and Buddhists come from India (frankincense).

[652] Another Christmas carol (*In the Bleak Midwinter*), this one explaining why exactly JESUS felt so strongly about Sabbath restrictions.

young child and his mother, and go into the land of Israel, for those who sought the young child's life are dead." And woke up, and went to the land of Israel. But when he heard that Archelaus was reigning over Judea in the place of his father, Herod, he was afraid to go there. And so, he withdrew into the region of Galilee, and came and lived in a city called Nazareth. This fulfilled another prophecy that said he was a Nazarene.

And once in Israel, his parents went every year to Jerusalem at the feast of the Passover. Now JESUS was twelve years old, and they went up according to the custom of the feast, but as they were returning, the boy JESUS stayed behind in Jerusalem. His parents did not know it, but supposing him to be in the company, they went a day's journey, and they looked for him among their relatives. When they did not find him there, they returned to Jerusalem, looking for him. After three days, they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers, who listened to them, and asking them questions. And all who heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers. But his mother said to him, "Son, why have you treated us this way? Your father and I were anxiously looking for you." He said to them, "Why were you looking for me? Did you not know that I must be doing in my Father's house, doing the works of my Father?" And he went down with them, and came to Nazareth. And his mother kept all these sayings in her heart.

And it is rumored that he traveled to other lands, including those of the *magi*, for during his childhood, he felt a constant call from GOD, and was driven to understand what it meant to be who he was. So it was that his understanding of the faith of Israel was unlike many others around him. So he was able to speak from his own authority, and not as the scribes. And JESUS grew in grace and wisdom, until he started his ministry, at about thirty years old.[653]

CHAPTER 6

As it is fulfilled in Isaiah the prophet, "I send my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way before you. The voice of one crying in the wilderness, 'Prepare the way of the LORD. Make his roads straight.'" Now in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judea, and Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, the word of GOD came to John, the son of Zechariah, in the wilderness. And in those days John the Baptist came, preaching in the wilderness of Judea and saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of Heaven is near." And John was clothed with camel's hair and a

[653] JESUS was obviously trained by someone. My suspicion is that he visited the wise men as a teenager, but given what a prodigy he was in the temple, doubtless he was also formally trained as a Rabbi.

leather belt around his waist. He ate locusts and wild honey. Then people from Jerusalem, all of Judea, and all the region around the Jordan went out to him, and they were baptized by him in the Jordan river, confessing their sins. But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming for his baptism he said to them, "You offspring of vipers,[654] who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Therefore bring forth fruit worthy of repentance, and do not think to yourselves, 'We have Abraham for our father,' for I tell you that GOD is able to raise up children to Abraham from these stones. Even now the axe lies at the root of the trees. Therefore, every tree that does not bring forth good fruit is cut down, and cast into the fire."
The crowds asked him, "What then must we do?" He answered them, "He who has two coats, let him give to him who has none. He who has food, let him do likewise." Tax collectors also came to be baptized, and they said to him, "Teacher, what must we do?" He said to them, "Collect no more than that which is appointed to you." Soldiers also asked him, saying, "What about us? What must we do?" He said to them, "Extort from no one by violence, neither accuse anyone wrongfully. Be content with your wages."
As the people were in expectation, and all were wondering in their hearts concerning John, whether perhaps he was the Christ, and John answered them all, "I indeed baptize you with water, but he comes who is mightier than I, the strap of whose sandals I am not worthy to loosen. He will baptize you with the *Ruach ha Kodesh* and with fire, whose winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will thoroughly cleanse his threshing floor. He will gather his wheat into the barn, but the chaff he will burn."[655] John had other harsh sayings to the people. He had also criticized Herod the ruler, because of Herodias. He was originally his brother Philip's wife, and John spoken to Herod publicly about his sin. Later on, Herod put John in prison.
But before that, JESUS came from Galilee to the Jordan to John, to be baptized by him. But John would have hindered him, saying, "I need to be baptized by you, and you come to me?" But JESUS, answering, said to him, "Allow it to happen now, for this is the proper way for us to fulfill all righteousness." Then he allowed him. And JESUS, when he was baptized, went up directly from the water; and Heaven were opened and he saw the *Ruach ha Kodesh* descending as a dove, and coming on him. And a voice out of Heaven said, "This is my beloved Son, with who I AM well pleased."

CHAPTER 7

Then JESUS returned from the Jordan, and was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to fast and prepare for his ministry. And he began to see stones as food, thinking about how easy it would be to pray for it to be turned into bread. Then Satan began to accuse him,[656] "They will say you are a glutton and a drunkard, that your ministry is about making miracles for the sake of an easy life. Is this all you are capable of, you worthless maggot?" And Satan began to torment him with harsh words, calling him a failure and not a true Messiah nor Son of GOD. Then JESUS came to his senses, "It is written, 'Humankind cannot live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of GOD.'" So JESUS thought of his mission on Earth, and how he would change the world for the better. But here also, Satan accused him, "You think that you can change the world? I do not think it can be done! Many have come with high ideals, but look at these cities," and he showed him all the cities of the world and their wealth, "their leaders all had high ambitions to do good, but they sold out. You also will use your gifts for wealth and power, to serve evil. You will become another corrupt leader, and there is no stopping it. All of them worship the false gods of power for its own sake. You will be no different." And JESUS repented of his ambitions, noble as they were, saying, "But it is written, 'You are

---

[654] Vipers eat their mother, so he was essentially accusing them of unfilial conduct in addition to deceit.
[655] JESUS is not sorting out good people from bad. Chaff (unlike tares) is part of wheat. GOD intends to cleanse our flaws and to use what he loves most about us. And it may be the very thing that we think are flaws that is saved. GOD loves our vulnerabilities and our brokenness.
[656] This portion was heavily edited by me, because of modern mentality that Satan's primary purpose is to tempt us. But not only does this completely abdicate responsibility in favor of "the devil made me do it" focusing the cause of their sin on Satan rather than correcting their issues, but it overlooks that in the Old Testament, Satan was just an adversary (like a prosecuting attorney), an angel whose message was accusation. Actual evil comes from knowledge of good and evil, Satan simply accuses us after the fact. For example, a family friend talked about how they had "been good" by dieting and exercising, and now were going to self-sabotage with a triple fudge ice cream, a bag of chips, etc. Satan is the accusation that comes after that, when we have gained pounds. For this reason, Satan role here is to challenge and torment JESUS, not to tempt him.

to worship the LORD your GOD, and serve him only.' I will set aside my goals of changing the world, and I will perform my purpose that GOD gave to me."[657]
But Satan was not done with him. Seeing that he intended to do GOD's will, he began to accuse and torment him in earnest, driving him to suicide. And JESUS thought briefly about death in a way that would make a spectacle. He thought of throwing himself off the top of the temple. Satan told him, "If you are the Son of GOD, you will have the power to save yourself, for it is written, 'He will put his angels in charge of you.' and, 'In their hands they will lift you up, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.' But if you are just another false prophet, you will die. Do you care to wager?" But JESUS said to him, "It is also written, 'Do not put the LORD your GOD to the test.' I will indeed die. But not for my sake, but for theirs." Then JESUS said to him, "Go away, Satan. I go to do my Father's will." When Satan was satisfied with his answers, he departed from him. He was left alone with the wild animals, and the angels came and served him.[658]
Now after John was taken into custody, JESUS returned with the power of the Spirit into Galilee, proclaiming the Good News of GOD, and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the Kingdom of GOD is near. Repent, and believe in the Good News." And news spread about him in the surrounding area, for he taught in the synagogues, and had been reported healing and casting out demons. And he came to Nazareth,[659] where he had been brought up. He entered, as was his custom, into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up to read. The scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him, and unrolling the scroll, he found the place where it was written, "The *Ruach ha Kodesh* is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, recovering of sight to the blind, to deliver those who are oppressed, and to proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD."
And he closed the scroll, gave it back to the attendant, and sat down.
The eyes of the synagogue were upon him. And he told them, "Today, this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing." And all wondered about him, "Is not this Joseph's son? Is not his father a carpenter? Is not his mother called Mary, and his brothers, James and Joseph and Simon and Judas? And are not all of his sisters with us? Where then did this man get all of these things?" But he said to them, "Truly I tell you, no prophet is acceptable in his hometown. But truly I tell you, there were many widows in Israel in the days of Elijah, when the sky was shut up three years and six months, when a great famine came over all the land. Elijah was sent to none of them, except to Zarephath, in the land of Sidon, to a woman who was a widow. There were many lepers in Israel in the time of Elisha the prophet, yet not one of them was cleansed, except Naaman, the Syrian."[660]
A hush descended on the synagogue.[661]
And then, they were all filled with wrath against him, and they rose up, threw him out of the city, and led him up to the hill where their city was built near, that they might throw him off the cliff. But he stood firm and walked past the group, and went on his way. And he could do no mighty work there, except that he laid his hands on a few sick people, and healed them. And he was amazed because of their unbelief.

CHAPTER 8

And leaving Nazareth, he came and lived in Capernaum, which is by the sea, in the region of Zebulun

---

[657] These are three temptations of life. The first is to fixate on personal needs, the second is be concerned with others and exerting control he second, and the third is to not value personal needs or others, which can lead to being suicidal. These are also common traps of cultists: prosperity gospel, cult of personality, and suicide cult.
[658] Omitted the part about being in the wilderness 40 days. This is the rationale for the season of Lent. However, this feels like a flimsy excuse for a largely non-Christian holiday. We are supposed to be in joy that JESUS is in our lives, and has shared in all the same hardships as us. Lent, however teaches a sort of dour sacrificialism, when JESUS explicitly said, "I desire mercy not sacrifice." The question of what you give up for Lent is on par with the idea that resolutions for New Years are a good thing. JESUS told us not to make oaths, either. These are pagan ideas tacked on to a society that should instead believe that Christ died for their sin. JESUS was indeed tested, but the temptation came from his own heart. Just as we have to put up with struggles, it's important to remember that he overcame his own sin, not something planted there by Satan.
[659] I found the sequence of the Bible here messed up. It says that he enters Capernaum then goes to Nazareth, and then back to Capernaum. That's possible, given how people travel sometimes, but it creates issues with sequence of events.
[660] These people are outsiders. The reason they are so annoyed is not that he is a false Messiah, but that he is clearly a Messiah, yet he is turning his message against his own people. They get no special treatment but in fact get shunned.
[661] I added this pause for dramatic effect.

and Naphtali, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken through Isaiah the prophet, saying, "The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, toward the sea, beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the nations. The people sitting in darkness have seen a great light, and those living in the land and shadow of death, on them a light has dawned." From that time, JESUS began to proclaim, and to say, "Repent. For the kingdom of Heaven is near." He was teaching them on the Sabbath day, and they were astonished at his teaching, for his word was with authority. In the synagogue there was a man who had a spirit of an unclean demon, and he shouted with a loud voice, "Have you come to destroy us, JESUS of Nazareth?" But JESUS cast him out, saying, "Be silent and come out of him." And the unclean spirit, convulsing him and crying with a loud voice, came out of him. And he was unharmed. And they were all amazed, so that they asked, "What is this? A new teaching? For with authority he commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey him." Demons also came out from many, crying out, and saying, "You are the Son of GOD." But he rebuked them and did not allow them to speak, because they knew that he was the Christ. When it was day, he departed and went into an uninhabited place, and the crowds looked for him, and came to him, and held on to him, so that he would not go away from them. But he said to them, "I must proclaim the good news of the Kingdom of GOD to the other cities also. For this reason I have been sent."

And there was also a woman who the people called Lilith[662], who was possessed by seven evil spirits. And she caused a disturbance in the area where she resided, such that even some from among the Pharisees were called to expel the spirits within her, but they could not. And they said among themselves, "Only GOD could heal such a woman." And she was greatly troubled and wanted to end her life. But JESUS found her, and called her by her real name (Mary Magdalene). And immediately the spirits came out of her. After this, she was preparing food at a Sabbath, and mistakenly left a place open for Elijah.[663] And JESUS came with his disciples. And so, Mary Magdalene also followed JESUS.[664] But she was not considered one of the twelve, but JESUS loved her as one of them.

And walking by the sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers: Simon and Andrew casting a net into the sea; for they were fishermen. He also saw two other brothers, James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, in the boat with Zebedee their father. He saw the two boats standing by the lake, but the fishermen had gone out of them, and were washing their nets. He entered into one of the boats, which was Simon's, and asked him to put out a little from the land. He sat down and taught the crowds from the boat. When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, "Put out into the deep, and let down your nets for a catch."[665] But Simon answered him, "Master, we worked all night, and took nothing; but at your word I will let down the nets." When they had done this, they caught a great multitude of fish, and their net was breaking. They beckoned to their partners in the other boat, that they should come and help them. They came, and filled both boats, so that they began to sink.

But Simon, when he saw it, fell down at JESUS' knees, saying, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, LORD." For he was amazed, and all who were with him, at the catch of fish which they had caught; and so also were James and John, sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon and Andrew. JESUS said to Simon, "Do not be afraid. Come, follow me, and I will make you fishers of people." And the four brought their boats to land, and left the fish, the boats, Zebedee the father, and followed him.

And JESUS entered into Simon's house. Now Simon's mother-in-law was suffering from a high fever, and they appealed to him about her. He stood over her, and rebuked the fever; and it left her. Immediately she rose up and served them food and drinks.

And all those who had any sick with various diseases brought them to him; and he laid his hands on every one of them, and healed them. And the report about him went out into all Syria, and they brought to him all who were sick, afflicted with various diseases and torments, possessed with demons, and epileptics, and paralytics; and he healed them. And Simon and those who were with him followed after him, and they found him, saying, "Everyone is looking for you." And he said to them,

---

[662] After Adam's original wife in apocryphal literature, who was spurned by Adam and thus against humanity.

[663] This would be a Passover tradition, not something observed on normal Sabbath.

[664] This paragraph is adapted with sequence of events based on *The Chosen* series. This is not accurate to the original text. I inserted this, because they tell indirectly of her having seven demons, but never actually mention the incident directly in the gospels.

[665] This part reminds me of a Mr Miyagi lesson. In fact, it appears like he originated the idea of symbolic teachings. "Go out further," as in, you're being too shy. Or "cast your nets on the other side," as in, you need to try a different tactic.

"Let us go somewhere else into the next towns, that I may preach there also, because I came out for this reason." So JESUS went about in all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the Good News of the Kingdom, and healing every disease and sickness among the people. Huge crowds from Galilee, Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judea, and from beyond the Jordan followed him.
And a leper came to him, begging him, and knelt down and said to him, "If you want to, you can make me clean." And being moved with compassion, he stretched out his hand, and touched him, and said to him, "I want to. Be cleansed." And immediately the leprosy departed from him, and he was made clean. And he strictly warned him, and immediately sent him out, and said to him, "See you say nothing to anyone, but go show yourself to the priest, and offer for your cleansing the things which Moses commanded, for a testimony to them." But he went out, and began to proclaim it freely, and to spread about the matter, so that JESUS could no more openly enter into a city, but was outside in desert places: and they came to him from everywhere.

CHAPTER 9

Seeing the crowds, he went up onto the mountain, and when he had sat down, his disciples came to him. Now a man named Judas Iscariot was an apprentice to a seller of land, and desired to buy this land for himself, hoping to get it cheaply (it was rich in salt deposits, so he tried at length to convince the seller it was barren). And Judas all his life sought to make an impact on the world around him. He was there to close a deal when JESUS's speech disrupted his plans.[666]
And many people followed him up to the mountain. But not only people followed him here. There were demon-possessed who suffered from various ailments among the crowds, beastkin came in disguise as well, and the *djinn* and *álfar* had also decided to listen, hidden in the caves and forests near the mountain. And when night fell, the stars and planets also remained in place. For all of creation knew that this was an important event. But while the humans believed this was simply an important prophet, those with knowledge from GOD understood it as the beginning of salvation.
And JESUS began to speak from the mount, "Blessed are you who are poor in spirit, for yours is the Kingdom of GOD. Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted. Blessed are the gentle, for they will inherit Earth. Blessed are the merciful, for they will obtain mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see GOD. Blessed are you who hunger now, for you will be filled. Blessed are you who weep now, for you will laugh. Blessed are you when people hate you, and when they exclude you and insult you, and throw out your name as evil, for the Son of Man's sake. Rejoice and leap for joy, for your reward is great in Heaven, for their fathers did the same thing to the prophets." But he said, "But woe to you who are rich. For you have received your consolation. Woe to you, you who are full now, for you will be hungry. Woe who laugh now, for you will mourn and weep. Woe when all people speak well of you, for their fathers did the same thing to the false prophets."[667]
Then he told them, "Can the blind guide the blind? Won't they both fall into a pit? A disciple is not above the teacher, but everyone when he is fully trained will be like his teacher. And why do you see the speck of chaff that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? First remove the log from your own eye, and then you can see clearly to remove the speck of chaff that is in your brother's eye."
He also said, "For there is no good tree that brings forth rotten fruit; nor again a rotten tree that brings forth good fruit. For each tree is known by its own fruit. For people do not gather figs from thorns, nor do they gather grapes from a bramble bush. The good person out of the goodness of his heart brings out that which is good, and the evil person out of the evil heart brings out that which is evil, for out of the abundance of the heart, his mouth speaks. Why then do you say to me, 'LORD, LORD,' and do not do the things which I say? Everyone who comes to me, and hears my words, he is like someone building a house, who laid a foundation on the rock. When a flood arose, the stream

---

[666] I wanted to have backstory for each of the disciples. This one is roughly based on *The Chosen*, since there was no formal story. Judas seems authentically like he should be a merchant, more than slightly zealous, and obsessed with making a difference. Ultimately, he did, as the land bought by his death became a burial ground for outsiders.
[667] In this, JESUS is saying that the Jewish idea that GOD punishes evil and rewards virtue. But JESUS tells another parable of how a widow petitions an unrighteous judge, and the judge gives her what she wants. GOD gives both the good and evil their desires, but it is not necessarily a representation of one's virtue. In fact, it may even be a false sign, as popular people often are lowest common denominator, while those who seek after true justice have a hard road for them.

broke against that house, and could not shake it, because it had been well built. But he who hears, and does not do, is like someone who built a house on the sand, and immediately it fell, and the ruin of that house was great." And he said to them, and Judas heard, "You are the salt of Earth. Salt is good, but if the salt has lost its flavor, with what will it be salted? It is then good for nothing, but to be cast out and trampled under people's feet. You are the salt of Earth, but if the salt has lost its flavor, with what will it be salted? It is then good for nothing, but to be cast out and trampled under people's feet. You are the light of the world. A city located on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do you light a lamp, and put it under a measuring basket, but on a stand; and it shines to all who are in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before people, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in Heaven."

And Pharisees among the crowd asked him if he presumed to destroy the law and the prophets. He responded, "Do not think that I came to destroy the law or the prophets. I did not come to destroy, but to fulfill. For truly, I tell you, until Heaven and Earth pass away, not the smallest letter or part of a letter will disappear from the law, until all things are accomplished. Therefore, whoever will break one of these least commandments, and teach others to do so, will be called least in the kingdom of Heaven; but whoever will do and teach them will be called great in the kingdom of Heaven. For I tell you that unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, there is no way you will enter into the kingdom of Heaven. You have heard that it was said to the ancient ones, 'Do not murder;' and whoever murders will be liable to judgement. But I tell you, that everyone who is angry with his brother without a cause will be liable to judgement; and whoever will say to his brother, 'Raqa,' will be in danger of the council; and whoever will say, 'You fool,' will be in danger of condemnation. If therefore you are offering your gift at the altar, and there remember that your brother has anything against you, leave your gift there before the altar, and go your way. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift. Agree with your adversary quickly, while you are with him in the way; lest perhaps the prosecutor deliver you to the judge, and the judge to the officer, and you be cast into prison. Truly I tell you, you will never get out of there until you have paid the last penny. You have heard that it was said, 'Do not commit adultery,' but I tell you that everyone who looks at a woman to lust after her has committed adultery with her already in his heart.[668] Again you have heard that it was said to them of old time, 'Do not make false vows, but fulfill your vows to the LORD.' But I tell you, do not swear at all: neither by Heaven, for it is the throne of GOD; nor by the Earth, for it is the footstool of his feet; nor by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. Neither should you swear by your head, for you cannot make one hair white or black. But let your 'Yes' be 'Yes' and your 'No' be 'No.' Whatever is more than these is of the evil one."[669]

He continued, "You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth.' But I tell you, do not set yourself against the one who is evil, that you may be children of your Father who is in Heaven. For he makes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the just and the unjust. So also you should be, to both those who are good and who are evil. Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, and pray for those who mistreat you. To the person who strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also; and from the person who takes away your coat, do not withhold your shirt either. Give to everyone who asks you, and do not ask him who takes away your goods to give them back again. Whatever you would like people to do to you, you also do the same to them. If you love only those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. If you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. And if you lend to those from who you hope to receive, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, to receive back as much. But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing back; and your reward will be great, and you will be children of the Most High; for he is kind toward the unthankful and evil. Therefore be merciful, even as your Father is also merciful. Do not judge, and you won't be judged. Do not condemn, and you won't be condemned.

---

[668] JESUS is not hardening the law even further, nor introducing thoughtcrime. Instead, he is teaching that the law is in fact impossible to follow, as all of us have fallen short of it. This is an introduction to his teaching on grace.

[669] There was a passage here about how "if a (body part) causes you to stumble, cut it off." But it seemed uncharacteristic for JESUS. It also contradicts the passage about the Body of Christ and how no part should see itself as less or more than the other parts. I suppose it's about ridding ourselves of attachments and addictions, but it seems off somehow.

Forgive, and you will be forgiven. You therefore are to be perfect, as your Heavenly Father is perfect."[670]
He continued, "Ask, and it will be given to you. Seek, and you will find. Knock, and it will be opened for you. For everyone who asks receives. He who seeks finds. To him who knocks it will be opened. Or who is there among you, who, if his son will ask him for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he will ask for a fish, who will give him a serpent? If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in Heaven give good things to those who ask him. Therefore, whatever you desire for people to do to you, so also you should do to them; for this is the law and the prophets."
JESUS preached, "Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravening wolves. By their fruits you will know them. Do you gather grapes from thorns, or figs from thistles? Even so, every good tree produces good fruit; but the corrupt tree produces evil fruit. A good tree cannot produce evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree produce good fruit.[671] Therefore, by their fruits you will know them. Be careful then that you do not do your righteousness before people, to be seen by them, or else you have no reward from your Father who is in Heaven. Therefore when you practice charitable giving, do not sound a trumpet before yourself, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may get glory from people. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. But when you practice charitable giving, do not let your left hand know what your right hand does, so that your charitable giving may be in secret, then your Father who sees in secret will reward you. And when you pray, you are not to be as the hypocrites, for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen by others. Truly, I tell you, they have received their reward. But you, when you pray, enter into your inner chamber, and having shut your door, pray to your Father who is in secret, and your Father who sees in secret will reward you."
But the people asked JESUS, "Why do we need charitable giving at all? Why can't we just pay Rome or the Pharisees tax money, and they can give to the poor?"[672] JESUS sighed, "Let's try this again. What happens to your money when Rome takes it? Does it return to Israel?" The person asking the question said, "Well... no, it's taken to Rome to support their economy." So he responded, "Do you think they'll send it back to help out your lame, your hungry, and your lepers? No? Then each of you help those you can, as the LORD moves your heart to do."
And he explained, "If you forgive people their wrongdoing, your Heavenly Father will also forgive you. Moreover when you fast, do not be like the hypocrites, with sad faces. For they disfigure their faces, that they may be seen by people to be fasting. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. But you, when you fast, anoint your head, and wash your face; so that you are not seen by people to be fasting, but by your Father who is in secret will reward you. Do not lay up treasures for yourselves on Earth, where moth and rust consume, and where thieves steal; but value the things of Heaven, where neither moth nor rust nor thieves can reach, for what you value is where your heart is. No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other; or else he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve both GOD and Mammon. Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? See the birds of the sky, that they do not sow, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns, and your Heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of much more value than they? And why are you anxious about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow. They do not toil, neither do they spin, yet I tell you that even Solomon in all his glory was not dressed like one of these. But if GOD so clothes the grass of the field, which today exists, and tomorrow is gone, won't he much more clothe you, you of little faith? Therefore do not be

---

[670] Perfect probably isn't the right word. Perfectionism is the curse of the law. JESUS shows how GOD forgives the wicked and the just. But in fact this is the point of the above impossible standards. If GOD forgives the fact that we do not maintain the law perfectly, so also do we need to get a grip and stop imposing impossible standards on each other. GOD provides for us and forgives our sins.
[671] This is part of why I reject many of the books of the Bible. JESUS taught us to be prepared for when we might die, and to love and forgive others, but there appears to have been an uphill battle against Jews who misrepresented Christ as a Messiah who would come at some point to punish the state of Rome.
[672] This is a meme often used against those who claim JESUS was a communist or socialist. If anything, he was a voluntaryist. He wanted people to help people, not big organizations. Such "charities" usually embezzle money if not take high taxes.

anxious, saying, 'What will we eat?', 'What will we drink?' or, 'With what will we be clothed?'[673] For the unbelievers seek after all these things, yet your Heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first the Kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Therefore do not be anxious for tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own." And when he finished, the crowd was astonished at the authority of his words, not like their scribes.

CHAPTER 10

And he entered into a boat, and returned to Capernaum, and many crowds gathered in the house where he stayed. And there was no room even around the door. Then four people came, carrying a man who was paralyzed on a bed. And when they could not bring him because of the crowd, they removed the roof above him. When they had broken it up, they let down the mat that the paralytic was lying on. And JESUS, seeing their faith, said to the paralytic, "Son, your sins are forgiven you." And some of the scribes and the Pharisees said to themselves, "Why does this man speak like that? He is blaspheming; who can forgive sins but GOD alone?"[674]

But JESUS, knowing their thoughts, said, "Why do you think evil in your hearts? For which is easier, to say, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Get up, and walk?' But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on Earth to forgive sins," he said to the paralyzed man, "I tell you, arise, and take up your cot, and go to your house." Immediately he rose up before them, and took up that which he was laying on, and departed to his house, glorifying GOD.

Then a certain centurion had one who was dear to him, sick and at the point of death. He had come first to the Jewish elders, who came to JESUS, saying, "He is worthy for you to do this for him, for he loves our nation, and he built our synagogue for us." And JESUS came to him, and the centurion explained the problem, "My servant lies in the house paralyzed, grievously tormented. If his paralysis continues, he will die." But his 'servant' was actually a son from illegitimate marriage. JESUS said, "I will come and heal him." The centurion had come with his friends, and when he heard this, he answered, "Do not trouble yourself, for I am not worthy for you to come under my roof. But I also am a man placed under authority, having under myself soldiers. If you give the word, he will be healed." When JESUS heard these things, he was amazed at him, and turned and said to the crowd who followed him, "I tell you, I have not found such great faith, no, not in all of Israel." And JESUS said to the centurion, "Go your way to your son. Let it be done for you as you have believed." And when those who were there returned to the house, they found his son was healed in that hour.

And as he passed by, he saw Matthew, the son of Alphaeus, sitting at the tax office, and he said to him, "Follow me." He left everything, and rose up and followed him. Now, James had been estranged from Matthew because of his status as a tax collector, but had taken the opportunity to fix things with him. Matthew made a great feast for him in his house, and invited his brother James. So Matthew invited his brother and his friends to eat with JESUS.

And there was a large crowd of tax collectors and others who were reclining with them. And when the Pharisees saw it, they said to his disciples, "Why does your Teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?" When he heard it, he said to them, "Those who are healthy have no need for a physician, but those who are sick do. But you go and learn what this means: 'I desire mercy, and not sacrifice,' for I came not to call the righteous, but sinners." They said to him, "The disciples of John often fast and pray, likewise also the disciples of the Pharisees, but those here eat and drink." He said to them, "Do the friends of the bridegroom fast, while the bridegroom is with them? But the days will come when the bridegroom will be taken away from them. Then they will fast in those days. And no one puts a piece of unshrunk cloth on an old garment; for the patch would tear away from the garment, and a worse hole is made. Neither do people put new wine into old wineskins, or else the skins would burst, and the wine pours out, and the skins ruined. No, they put new wine into fresh wineskins, and

---

[673] It's interesting that he chooses these three questions. Clothing, food, and drink are commonly what people make pronouncements about GOD's judgement. Deuteronomy for example talks about wearing women's clothing and certain foods as abominations. Other religions sometimes prohibit alcohol. Ultimately, GOD does not place value on those. There is also a theme about wasting one's life on possessions versus love.

[674] Ironically, the Catholic church claims that the priests can forgive sins. Same gospel of works as the Jews, but now they want the priests taking credit for GOD's doing. In either case, they deny JESUS does have the power to forgive sins.

both are preserved." But the Pharisees saw still more to criticize, for they saw that some of his disciples ate bread with defiled, that is, unwashed, hands, they found fault (for the Pharisees, and all Jewish people, do not eat unless they wash their hands and forearms, holding to the Tradition of the Elders; they do not eat when they come from the marketplace unless they wash; and there are many other things which they have received and hold to, the washing of cups and pitchers and copper vessels and dining couches). The Pharisees and the scribes asked him, "Why do your disciples not walk according to the Tradition of the Elders, but eat their bread with unwashed hands?" He said to them, "Well did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written, 'This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me. And in vain do they worship me, teaching instructions that are the commandments of humans.' For you set aside the commandment of GOD, and hold tightly to human tradition." He said to them, "Full well do you reject the commandment of GOD, that you may establish your tradition. For Moses said, 'Honor your father and your mother;' and, 'Anyone who speaks evil of father or mother, let him be put to death.' But you say, 'If anyone tells his father or mother, "Whatever profit you might have received from me is Corban, that is to say, given to GOD;"' then you no longer allow him to do anything for his father or his mother, making void the word of GOD by your tradition, which you have handed down. You do many things like this."
And he called the crowd to himself again, and said to them, "Hear me, all of you, and understand. There is nothing from outside of the person, that going into him can defile him; but the things which proceed out of the person are what defile the person. If any man have ears, let him hear."[675] Then the disciples asked him about this. He said to them, "Are you thus without understanding also? Do you not perceive that whatever goes into the person from outside cannot defile him, because it does not go into his heart, but into his stomach, then into the latrine, cleansing all the foods?" He said, "That which proceeds out of the man, that defiles the man. But out of the heart often proceed evil desires. All these evil things come from within, and they defile the man." JESUS said to them, "Now you Pharisees cleanse the outside of the cup and of the platter, but your inward part is full of extortion and wickedness. You foolish ones, did not he who made the outside make the inside also? But give for gifts to the needy those things which are within, and see, all things will be clean to you. But woe to you, Pharisees. For you tithe the mint and rue and every herb, but you bypass justice and the love of GOD. You ought to have done these, and not to have left the other undone. Woe to you. For you love the best seats in the synagogues, and the greetings in the marketplaces. Woe to you. For you are like hidden graves, and the people who walk over them do not know it."
Some scribes that had come with the Pharisees answered him, "Teacher, in saying this you insult us also." He said, "Woe to you scribes also. For with a stroke of ink or a carving on a tablet, you load people with burdens that are difficult to carry, and you yourselves won't even lift one finger to help carry those burdens. Woe to you. For you build the tombs of the prophets, and your fathers killed them. So you are witnesses and consent to the works of your fathers. For they killed them, and you build their tombs. Therefore also the wisdom of GOD said, 'I will send to them prophets and apostles. And some of them, they will kill and persecute, that the blood of all the prophets which was shed from the foundation of the world may be required of this generation, from the blood of Abel to the blood of Zechariah who perished between the altar and the sanctuary.' Yes, I tell you, it will be required of this generation. Woe to you scribes. For you took away the key of knowledge. You did not enter in yourselves, and those who were entering in, you hindered. Those who hear my words after I have gone to the Father will not understand what they mean, because of you."
And when he left there, the scribes and the Pharisees began to oppose him bitterly, and to provoke him to speak about many things. They began seeking to catch him in something he might say, in order that they might accuse him.
JESUS and his disciples went to another village. And afterwards, JESUS began to have many people declaring they would follow him. A certain man said to him, "I want to follow you wherever you go." And JESUS said to him, "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the sky have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head." He said to another, "Follow me." But he said, "LORD, allow me first to go

[675] Many who call themselves Christians today are really Jews. They see things in terms of being "good" to get into Heaven, a cleanliness gospel. The fixation of COVID cases, and excluding people from church for not wearing masks or whatever is Judaism Redux. JESUS had no interest in any of this crap, though. Church is where sinners are welcomed.

and bury my father." But JESUS said to him, "Leave the dead to bury their own dead, but you go and announce the Kingdom of GOD." Another also said, "I want to follow you, LORD, but first allow me to bid farewell to those who are at my house." But JESUS said to him, "No one, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the Kingdom of GOD." JESUS said, "Whoever does not bear his own cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple. For which of you, desiring to build a tower, does not first sit down and count the cost, to see if he has enough to complete it? Or perhaps, when he has laid a foundation, and is not able to finish, everyone who sees begins to mock him, saying, 'This man began to build, and was not able to finish.' Or what king, as he goes to encounter another king in war, will not sit down first and consider whether he is able with ten thousand to meet him who comes against him with twenty thousand? Or else, while the other is yet a great way off, he sends an envoy, and asks for conditions of peace.[676] So therefore whoever of you who does not renounce all that he has, he cannot be my disciple." And thus, those to followed him left behind their lives.

CHAPTER 11

Now one Sabbath as JESUS was leaving the synagogue, he was going through the grain fields. And his disciples plucked the heads of grain, and ate, rubbing them in their hands. But some of the Pharisees saw this and said to them, "Why do your disciples do that which is not lawful on the Sabbath day?" JESUS, answering them, said, "Have you not read what David did when he was hungry, he, and those who were with him entered into the house of GOD, in the time of Abiathar the high priest, and ate the show bread, which is not lawful to eat except for the priests, and gave also to those who were with him?" He said to them, "The Son of Man is master of the Sabbath." And so he entered again into the synagogue, and there was a man there who had his hand withered. And he said to the man with the withered hand, "Rise up, and stand in the middle." He arose and stood. Then JESUS said to them, "I ask you, is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good, or to do harm? To save a life, or to destroy it?" But they were silent. And when he had looked around at them with anger, being grieved at the hardening of their hearts, he said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." He stretched it out, and his hand was restored.

And they were filled with rage, and talked with one another about what they might do to JESUS. And so the Pharisees went out, and immediately conspired with the Herodians against him, how they might destroy him. He left to the mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to GOD. And when it was day, he called his disciples. While JESUS had many followers, among his disciples, he only considered twelve: Simon (who he later named Peter), Andrew his brother, James and John, Philip, Nathanael Bar-Tolmai, Matthew and James (who was called the Lesser) the sons of Alphaeus, Thomas, Simon known as the Zealot, Judas Thaddeus, and Judas Iscariot (who would betray him).

CHAPTER 12

And JESUS withdrew to the sea with his disciples, and a large crowd followed from Galilee, from Judea, from Jerusalem, from Idumea, beyond the Jordan, and from Tyre and Sidon. A large crowd, when they heard what great things he did, came to him, and he healed them all, and commanded them that they should not make him known. This was to fulfill what had been spoken through Isaiah the prophet, saying, "My servant who I have chosen, my beloved in who I delight. I will put my Spirit on him, and he will proclaim justice to the nations. He will not quarrel, nor shout, nor will anyone hear his voice in the streets. He won't break a bruised reed.[677] And he won't put out a smoldering wick, until he leads justice to victory. And in his name the nations will hope."

And he told his disciples that a small boat should stay near him because of the crowd, so that they would not press on him. And he began to teach by the seaside.

He told a parable, "Whoever has ears to hear, let him hear. The Kingdom of GOD is like someone who scatters seed on Earth, and he sleeps and rises night and day, and the seed springs up and grows; he doesn't know how. The Earth bears fruit, first the blade, then the ear, then the full grain in the ear.

---

[676] There's a long road of discipleship, and you shouldn't start if you aren't up for the challenge.

[677] I removed several fire and brimstone condemnations from Matthew because they were very much rants against sinners. I suspect (like Muslims accuse), that the Bible has been altered by enemies of Christianity. But unlike them, JESUS is more peaceful, not more violent, than text tells us. This is because being peaceful is actually a greater threat to the violent and controlling systems of the world.

But when the fruit is ripe, immediately he puts forth the sickle, because the harvest has come."[678]
And he said, "To what will we liken the Kingdom of GOD? Or with what parable will we use for it?" And he began to compare it to a mustard tree seed, which when first sown is smaller than all other seeds, but once planted grows greater than all garden plants and puts out large branches that the birds in the sky can rest under its shadow.[679]
JESUS set another parable before them, telling that the kingdom of Heaven is like a person who sowed good seed in his field, but while everyone slept, his enemy came and sowed tares also among the wheat, and went away. And when the crop grew, the tares also appeared. The servants asked the man, "Sir, did you not sow good seed in your field? Where did these tares come from?" And the man said, "An enemy has done this."[680] And the servants asked if they should gather them up, but the man said to wait until later.
JESUS spoke another parable to them, comparing the kingdom of Heaven to yeast that a woman took and hid among grain meal until it was all leavened. JESUS spoke all these things in parables to the crowds; and without a parable, he did not speak to them, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken through the prophet, saying, "I will open my mouth in parables; I will utter things hidden since the beginning of the world." And it happened that when JESUS had finished these parables, he departed from there.
And leaving the crowd, they took the disciples in the boat with him. When evening had come, he said to them, "Let us go over to the other side." So they launched out. But as they sailed, he fell asleep. And a violent storm came up on the sea, so much that the boat was covered with the waves, but he was asleep. They came to him, and woke him up, saying, ""LORD, Save us! We are dying." And he awoke, and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, "Peace. Be still. I AM." And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm. And he said to them, "Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?" And they were amazed, saying, "What kind of person is this, that even the wind and the sea obey?"
And while he was alone, the twelve asked him about the parables. And he said to them, "To you has been given the mystery of the Kingdom of GOD, but to those who are outside, all things are done in parables, that 'seeing they may see, and not perceive; and hearing they may hear, and not understand; lest perhaps they should turn and be forgiven.'" He asked them, "Do you not understand this parable? And how will you understand all of the parables? The farmer sows the word. And these are the ones by the road where the word is sown; and when they have heard, immediately what is said is discredited by the enemies of GOD. And these in a similar way are those who are sown on the rocky places, who, when they have heard the word, immediately receive it with joy, but they have no root in themselves, but are short-lived. Then, when oppression or persecution arises because of the word, immediately they stumble. And others are those who are sown among the thorns; these are the ones who have heard the word, and the cares of the age and all distractions entering in choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful. And those which were sown on the good ground are those who hear the word, and accept it, and bear fruit, some thirty times, some sixty times, and some one hundred times."
JESUS also said, "The kingdom of Heaven is like a treasure hidden in the field, which a man found, and hid. In his joy, he goes and sells all that he has, and buys that field. Again, the kingdom of Heaven is like a man who is a merchant seeking fine pearls, and having found one pearl of great price, he went and sold all that he had, and bought it. Have you understood all these things?" They answered him, "Yes, we see." And he said to them, "Therefore, every scribe who has been made a disciple in the kingdom of Heaven is like a man who is a householder, who brings out new and old things." And he did not speak to the crowds without a parable, but to his own disciples he explained everything.

---

[678] This is another seeming apocalypse of JESUS. In fact, sometimes the apocalypse is compared to a harvest. But there is another way of seeing this. His next parable compares the kingdom of Heaven like a seed giving fruit. In other words, GOD'S kingdom isn't something that we immediately see, but a slow process, like a seed sprouting into a grain. This is quite different from hoping JESUS will come to punish sinners, though.
[679] This is mistakenly used to "prove" that the Bible is unscientific, since mustard greens cannot grow into trees. But this isn't a mustard green seed. It's what's called a mustard tree. Sorry folks, different species.
[680] Actually, tares (darnel) seem to be a natural offshoot of planting certain grains. Until modern machine sorting of seeds, these seeds always wound up mixed in with the wheat because they were similar. The point of this story is a certain amount of religious toleration, which the Jews of the time were sorely lacking. The kingdom of Heaven, then, is where we intend things according our ideas of what is good, but GOD (who we sometimes see as an enemy to our plans) has other ideas.

CHAPTER 13

Now there were some present at the same time who told him about the Galileans, whose blood Pilate had mixed with their sacrifices. And he answered and said to them, "Do you think that these Galileans were worse sinners than all the other Galileans, because they suffered these things? I tell you, no, but unless you repent, you will all perish in the same way. Or those eighteen, on who the tower in Siloam fell, and killed them; do you think that they were worse offenders than all the others who dwell in Jerusalem? I tell you, no, but, unless you repent, you will all perish in the same way."[681]
JESUS spoke this parable about a man that had a fig tree planted in his vineyard, and he came seeking fruit on it, and found none. So he said to the vine dresser, "These three years I have come looking for fruit on this fig tree, and found none. Cut it down. Why does it waste the soil?" The man answered, "LORD, leave it alone this year also, until I dig around it, and fertilize it. And if it bears fruit next time, it is well; if not, cut it down."[682]
JESUS was teaching in one of the synagogues on the Sabbath day. And a woman who had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years, and she was bent over, and could in no way straighten herself up. When JESUS saw her, he called her, and said to her, "Woman, you are freed from your infirmity." He laid his hands on her, and immediately she stood up straight, and glorified GOD. The ruler of the synagogue, being indignant because JESUS had healed on the Sabbath, said to the crowd, "There are six days when work should be done. Therefore come on those days and be healed, and not on the Sabbath day." Therefore JESUS answered him, "You hypocrites. Does not each one of you free his ox or his donkey from the stall on the Sabbath, and lead him away to water? Ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, who Satan had bound, eighteen years, be freed from this bondage on the Sabbath day?" But they could make no reply to this.
And it happened, when he went into the house of one of the rulers of the Pharisees on that Sabbath to eat bread, that they were watching him. And a certain man who had dropsy was in front of him. JESUS, answering, spoke to the law scholars and Pharisees, saying, "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath or not?" But they were silent. He took him, and healed him, and let him go. He spoke to those who were invited, when he noticed how they chose the best seats, and said to them, "When you are invited by anyone to a marriage feast, do not sit in the best seat, since perhaps someone more honorable than you might be invited by him, and he who invited both of you would come and tell you, 'Make room for this person.' Then you would begin, with shame, to take the lowest place. But when you are invited, go and sit in the lowest place, so that when he who invited you comes, he may tell you, 'Friend, move up higher.' Then you will be honored in the presence of all who sit at the table with you. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted." He also said to the one who had invited him, "When you make a dinner or a supper, do not call your friends, nor your brothers, nor your kinsmen, nor rich neighbors, or perhaps they might also return the favor, and pay you back. But when you make a feast, ask the poor, the maimed, the lame, or the blind; and you will be blessed, because they do not have the resources to repay you. For you will be repaid in the resurrection of the righteous." Now when one of those who were reclining with him heard these things, he said to him, "Blessed who will eat bread in the Kingdom of GOD."
But JESUS said to him this parable, "A certain man made a great supper, and he invited many people. And he sent his servant at the hour for supper to tell those who were invited, 'Come, for everything is ready now.' They all as one began to make excuses. The first said to him, 'I have bought a field, and I must go and see it. Please have me excused.' Another said, 'I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I must go try them out. Please have me excused.' Another said, 'I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come.' The servant came, and told his LORD these things. Then the master of the house, being angry, said to his servant, 'Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in the poor, maimed, blind, and lame.' The servant said, 'LORD, it is done as you commanded, and there is still

---

[681] GOD does not punish us for sins, people simply die. There are accidents and there are people who do violence against others. Stuff happens, after all. We shouldn't see it as GOD'S judgement, but learn from mistakes.
[682] The previous passage talks about not being worried so much, so I assume it's a mixture of extremes. Don't worry too much about wealth, but rather be productive in your calling. And yet, JESUS himself makes a statement by withering the fig, that he is like the unproductive fig, whose only crime is not being ready. He uses this image to show not only his death but also his return with his raising to life.

room.' The LORD said to the servant, 'Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled.' So also, all are welcome, whether they are considered worthy of the Kingdom by men." As he said these things, all his adversaries were disappointed, and all the crowd rejoiced for all the glorious things that were done by him.

Around this time, when the Pharisees were making pronouncements in the synagogue concerning cleanliness, a cistern broke. This was to fulfill what Jeremiah had said, "For my people have committed two evils: they have forsaken me, the spring of living waters, and cut them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water." And the unclean water was a great hardship where many people had to travel out of town for water, and the water in town was putrefied with waste water, and would make people sick to drink. One of the rulers of the synagogue came, a man named Jairus. And seeing him, he fell down at JESUS' feet, and begged with him to come into his house, for he had an only daughter, about twelve years. He pleaded repeatedly, saying, "My little daughter is at the point of death. Please come and lay your hands on her, that she may be made healthy, and live."

And he went with him, and a large crowd followed him, and they pressed upon him on all sides. Now a woman, who had an issue of blood for twelve years,[683] who had spent all her living and had suffered many things by many physicians, and could not be healed by any. She was no better from their treatment, but had in fact grown worse. Having heard the things concerning JESUS, came up behind him in the crowd, and she touched the fringe of his garment, for she said within herself, "If I just touch his garment, I will be made well." And immediately the flow of her blood was dried up, and she felt in her body that she was healed of her affliction. And JESUS, perceiving in himself that the power had gone out from him, turned around in the crowd, and asked, "Who touched my clothes?" When all denied it, Simon and those with him said, "Master, the crowds press and jostle you." But JESUS said, "Someone did touch me, for I perceived that power has gone out of me." When the woman saw that she was not hidden, she came trembling, and falling down before him declared to him in the presence of all the people the reason why she had touched him, and how she was healed immediately. But JESUS, turning around and seeing her, said, "Daughter, cheer up. Your faith has made you well."

And when JESUS came into the Jairus's house, and saw the flute players, and the crowd in noisy disorder as paid mourners wept of his daughter's death. He told them, "Go away, for the girl is not dead, but asleep." And they laughed at him. But when the crowd was put out, he entered in, took her by the hand, saying, "***Talitha, Koum***," which means, "Little Girl, Arise." Her spirit returned, and she woke up immediately. He commanded that something be given to her to eat. Her parents were amazed, but he commanded them to tell no one what had been done. But a dead body returning to life is difficult to hide, and a report went out through the land.

And the disciples of JESUS helped the Roman officials rebuild the cistern, for they were of many different trades with skills to offer. So it was that despite the strange reports concerning JESUS in Capernaum, the Romans pretended not to notice.

And as JESUS passed from here, two blind men said to him, "Have mercy on us, son of David." And he asked them, "Do you believe that I am able to heal you?" They told him that they did. So he touched their eyes, saying, "Let it be done to you according to your faith." She sternly warned them not to tell anyone, but they went and spread his fame all the more.

Then one possessed by a demon that caused him to be blind and mute, was brought to him and he healed him, so that the mute man spoke and saw. And all the crowds were amazed, and said, "Can this be the son of David?" But when the Pharisees heard it, they said, "This man does not cast out demons, except by Beelzebul, the prince of the demons."

Knowing their thoughts, he said to them, "Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation, and every city or house divided against itself will not stand. And if Satan casts out Satan, he is divided against himself. How then will his kingdom stand? If I by Beelzebul cast out demons, by who do your children cast them out? Therefore they will be your judges. But if I by the *Ruach ha Kodesh* cast out demons, then the Kingdom of GOD has come upon you."

He told them a parable, where I man tried to enter the house of a strong man, but was unable to carry off his belongings unless he first tied up the man. JESUS compared it to his discussion about casting

[683] The woman's menstruation basically forbade here from going to the temple to worship. This is pointing out how in JESUS's time, there were many people who were permanent outcasts and couldn't worship normally because of the rules.

out spirits, "An unclean spirit, when he is gone out of the person, passes through waterless places, seeking rest, and does not find it. Then he says, 'I will return into my house from which I came out,' and when he has come back, he finds it empty, swept, and put in order. Then he goes, and takes with himself seven other spirits more evil than he is, and they enter in and dwell there. The last state of that person becomes worse than the first. Therefore I tell you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven people, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven.[684] And whoever speaks a word against the Son of Man, it will be forgiven him; but whoever speaks against the *Ruach ha Kodesh*, it will not be forgiven him, neither in this age, nor in that which is to come. Either make the tree good, and its fruit good, or make the tree corrupt, and its fruit corrupt; for the tree is known by its fruit. You offspring of vipers, how can you, being evil, speak good things? For out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaks. The good person out of his good heart brings out good things, and the evil person out of his evil heart brings out evil things. But I tell you that every careless word that people speak, they will give account of it. For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned."

The Pharisees and Sadducees came, and testing him, asked him to show them a sign from Heaven. But he answered and said to them, "When it is evening, you say, 'It will be fair weather, for the sky is red.' In the morning, 'It will be foul weather today, for the sky is red and threatening.' You know how to discern the appearance of the sky, but you cannot discern the signs of the times. An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign, but no sign will be given it but the sign of Jonah the prophet.[685] For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of Earth. The people of Nineveh will stand up in the judgement with this generation, and will condemn it, for they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and something greater than Jonah is here. The queen of the south will rise up in the judgement with this generation, and will condemn it, for she came from a distant land to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and there is greater than Solomon is here."

While he was yet speaking to the crowds, his mother and his brothers stood outside, seeking to speak to him. Then one said to him, "Your mother and your brothers[686] stand outside, seeking to speak to you." But he answered him who spoke to him, "Who is my mother? Who are my brothers?" And he stretched out his hand towards his disciples, and said, "These are my mother and my brothers. For whoever does the will of my Father who is in Heaven, he is my brother, and sister, and mother."

All the religious leaders of the city came out to meet JESUS. And when they saw him, they pleaded with him to leave their region, for his fame disturbed the peace. And they were aggrieved, for the Roman guard would not arrest JESUS for them, because they owed a debt to him for fixing the cistern.

CHAPTER 14

Soon afterwards, JESUS went about through cities and villages, teaching and proclaiming the good news of the Kingdom of GOD. With him were the twelve, and certain women: Mary who was called Magdalene, from who seven demons had gone out; and Joanna, the wife of Chuza, Herod's steward; Susanna; and many others. And he began to send the twelve out two by two; and he gave them authority over the unclean spirits. And he commanded them that they should take nothing for their journey, except a staff only: no bread, no pack, no money in their belts, but to wear sandals, and not to put on two tunics. He said, "Go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. And as you go, proclaim, saying, 'The kingdom of Heaven is near.' Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons. Freely you received, freely give. And into whatever city or village you enter, find out who in it is worthy; and stay there until you go on. Do not go from house to house. And if any place will not receive you or listen to you, as you depart from there, shake off the dust that is under your feet for a testimony against them. I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves, so be clever as foxes and

---

[684] That is, as long as you are accusing GOD, you are like the house divided, a person whose soul is created by the Holy Spirit, yet at war with the Holy Spirit. A person who thinks GOD is evil cannot be satisfied even in a paradise, because to them, paradise looks like Hell because of their confused accusations.

[685] The death and resurrection of JESUS is viewed as a great act, of the forgiveness of sins, that Christ died for us. But that such a thing was *needed* is kinda sad.

[686] Catholicism teaches that Mary was a perpetual virgin, yet here are his brothers. He also has some sisters.

innocent as doves."[687]
The women attending made it their job to provide for JESUS and his disciples from their possessions. But Mary thought of herself as an unofficial member of the twelve, and wanted to go with them, only there were none of the other women who wanted the same.[688]
The disciples asked, "How will we protect ourselves?" But JESUS said, "They will deliver you up to councils, and in their synagogues they will scourge you. Yes, and you will be brought before governors and kings for my sake, for a testimony to them and to the nations. But when they deliver you over, do not be anxious how or what you will say, for it will be given you in that hour what you will say. For it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father who speaks in you. And you will be hated by all for my name's sake. But when they persecute you in one city, flee to the other. And if they persecute you in the other, head to the next. For truly I tell you, you will not have gone through the cities of Israel before the Son of Man comes."
He also told them, "A disciple is not above the teacher, nor a servant above his master. It is enough for the disciple that he be like his teacher, and the servant like his master. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebul, how much more those of his household. Therefore do not be afraid of them, for there is nothing covered that will not be revealed; and hidden that will not be known. What I tell you in the darkness, speak in the light; and what you hear whispered in the ear, proclaim on the housetops. And do not be afraid of those who kill the body, but are not able to kill the spirit. Rather, fear him who is able to destroy both spirit and body.[689] Are not two sparrows sold for an assarion?[690] Not one of them falls on the ground apart from your Father's will, but the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Therefore do not be afraid. You are of more value than many sparrows.
Everyone therefore who confesses me before people, I will also confess him before my Father who is in Heaven, but whoever is ashamed of me before people, he also is ashamed of me before my Father who is in Heaven.[691] And do not think that I came to send peace on Earth. I did not come to send peace, but a sword. For I came to set a man at odds against his household. You have heard "Honor your father and mother," and indeed you should do so. But suppose your father and mother hate you and cast you out because you have chosen my words over what they have taught? For this reason a man will leave his father and mother, and will seek after me.[692] So it is that whoever seeks to preserve his life will lose it; and whoever risks his life for my sake will find it."[693] He continued, "So when you go out, welcome others in my name. For whoever welcomes others welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me. And he also shall be welcomed by the one who sent me. Just as you are received, welcome also. For whoever receives you receives me, and whoever receives me receives who sent me. And whoever gives one of these little ones just a cup of cold water to drink because he is a disciple, truly I tell you he will in no way lose his reward." So they went out and proclaimed that all should repent. They cast out many demons, and anointed many with oil who were

---

[687] I do not like the disciples of JESUS being compared to crafty creatures like snakes. They are clever as foxes, who avoid being caught in pits or chased by animals.
[688] This part about wanting to be like the male disciples wasn't part of the original Biblical text. But one of the things that would have distinguished someone as being demon possessed is a certain amount of oddity. Being a tomboy in a patriarchal society would have qualified.
[689] This passage is mistakenly used to defend conditional salvation. The rationale goes, "The one who can kill the body is the imagined enemy, Rome. Who, then, is the real enemy? Surely not Israel's own god. The real enemy is the accuser, Satan." But Isaiah informs us that GOD is in authority over good and evil, and JESUS tells us GOD cares for the smallest beings (like sparrows). Thus, Satan cannot damn souls but only accuse them, and GOD will not damn soul because he cares for us. I also changed "soul" to "spirit." The soul is part of the *Ruach ha Kodesh*, the Spirit of the LORD, and as such is immortal. Our spirits, however is the lesser self, which can technically be erased. You can become dispirited through depression, but this is a condition of despair and thus temporary. I also want to impress that it is important for use not to fear Satan, because to fear something is to give it power over you. Neither death, nor Hell, nor Satan are to be feared, for GOD is the one we should give power and glory.
[690] A Roman copper coin.
[691] Altered this sentence because it otherwise effectively invalidates the point of the sentence, that human beings are worth more than the sparrows GOD also cares for.
[692] Note the parallel to leaving your parents to seek out your wife.
[693] Having struggled with depression, this particular passage is a stumbling block to me. It seems to mean not to be so concerned of "surviving" that you forget to live. Also there is a theme that you may argue with others over accepting Christ. You're not to live as a people-pleaser but try to live in faith to GOD.

sick, and healed them. And they showed others hospitality.
Now after these things, JESUS also appointed seventy-two others, and sent them two by two ahead of him into every city and place, where he was about to come. Then he said to them, "The harvest is indeed plentiful, but the laborers are few. Pray therefore to the LORD of the harvest, that he may send out laborers into his harvest. Go your way. I send you out as lambs among wolves. Carry no money bag, nor pack, nor sandals; and greet no one on the way. Into whatever house you enter, first say, 'Peace be to this house.' If a peaceful person is there, your peace will rest on him; but if not, it will return to you. Remain in that same house, eating and drinking the things they give, for the laborer is worthy of his wages. Do not go from house to house. Into whatever city you enter, and they receive you, eat the things that are set before you. Heal the sick who are in it, and tell them, 'The Kingdom of GOD has come near to you.' But into whatever city you enter, and they do not receive you, go out into its streets and say, 'Even the dust from your city that clings to our feet, we wipe off against you. Nevertheless know this, that the Kingdom of GOD is near.' I tell you, it will be more tolerable for Sodom than for that city. Whoever listens to you listens to me, and whoever rejects you rejects me. Whoever rejects me rejects him who sent me." Those he sent out returned with joy, saying, "LORD, even the demons are subject to us in your name."[694] He said to them, "I have given you authority to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing will in any way hurt you. Nevertheless, do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you."[695]
This report went out concerning him in the whole of Judea, and in all the surrounding region. And the disciples of John told him about all these things. Now when John heard in the prison the works of the Christ, he sent a message by his disciples and said to him, "Are you the one who is to come, or should we look for another?" In that hour he cured many of diseases and plagues and evil spirits; and to many who were blind he gave sight. JESUS answered them, "Go and tell John the things which you have seen and heard: that the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have good news preached to them. Blessed who is not offended by me." When John's messengers had departed, JESUS began to say to the crowds concerning John, "What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken by the wind? But what did you go out to see? A man in soft clothing? Those who wear soft things are in kings' houses. But what did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and much more than a prophet. This is the one of who it is written, 'I send my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way before you.' Truly I tell you, among those who are born of women there has not arisen anyone greater than John the Baptist; yet he who is least in the kingdom of Heaven is greater than he.[696] And from the days of John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of Heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force. For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John. And if you are willing to receive it, this is Elijah, who is to come. He who has ears to hear, let him hear."
When all the people and the tax collectors heard this, they declared GOD to be just, having been baptized with John's baptism. But the Pharisees and the law scholars rejected the counsel of GOD, not being baptized by him themselves. JESUS said, "To what then will I liken the people of this generation? What are they like? They are like children who sit in the marketplace, and call one to another, saying, 'We played the flute for you, and you did not dance. We mourned, and you did not weep.' For John the Baptist came neither eating bread nor drinking wine, and you say, 'He has a demon.' The Son of Man has come eating and drinking, and you say, 'A gluttonous man, and a drunkard; a friend of tax collectors and sinners.'[697] Wisdom is justified by all her children."
And many indeed did have opinions about JESUS, saying, "He is Elijah." Others said, "He is a prophet, like one of the prophets." But Herod, when he heard this, said, "This is John, who I beheaded. He has risen." For he had killed John at the request of his wife and daughter. And from that point onward, he sought to see him. And some Pharisees came, saying to him, "Get out of here, and go away, for

---

[694] Satan's purpose is as an accusing angel. So the passage about Satan falling from Heaven is problematic. I started the quote later.
[695] Originally, it also said, "...but rather rejoice, because your names are written in Heaven." But this is too close to the problematic "book of life" teaching of Revelation, so I removed this part.
[696] I think JESUS is saying that John is the most committed and righteous Jew that ever lived. However, GOD'S Kingdom is not about morality. It's about grace.
[697] Nothing has changed since JESUS. Politicians get condemned for their flaws, as though the we do not also have faults.

Herod seeks after you." And he said to them, "Go and tell that fox that I will cast out demons and perform cures today and tomorrow, and the third day I complete my mission. Nevertheless I must go on my way today and tomorrow and the next day, for 'it cannot be that a prophet perish outside of Jerusalem.' Jerusalem, Jerusalem, that kills the prophets, and stones those who are sent to her. How often I wanted to gather your children together, like a hen gathers her own brood under her wings, and you refused. Your house is abandoned to you. And I tell you, you will not see me again until you say, 'Blessed who comes in the name of GOD.'"

CHAPTER 15

Then John's disciples came, and took the dead body of John the Baptist, and buried him; and they went and told JESUS of his death. Now when JESUS heard this, he withdrew from there in a boat, to a secluded place to be alone.

When the disciples had been sent out two by two, not everything went as they had hoped. In the Decapolis, one of the groups had said a parable that offended many mixed groups of Jews, Greeks, and other Gentiles. And there was great strife and disharmony, and those of the village relayed word of a war brewing between Jews and Gentiles. And JESUS told them, "My mission is one that the world is not used to. You will encounter failure, and it is important to keep trying." He gathered the disciples to resolve the situation, but Simon was not among them. Now, Simon had a wife, and while they were sent out, she conceived, but the pregnancy ended, and almost ended her life. And she had been cold to him for some time without him understand what the cause was, but shortly before this trip, his wife had revealed her miscarriage. And JESUS noticed his absence, and he told John, "Stay behind for Simon, for this journey cannot proceed as has been planned without his presence." So John told Simon of this journey, and the two arrived after the others, for they raveled on foot, while the others took a boat.

While the other disciples were heading toward the source of the conflict, they arrived at the country of the Gerasenes, which is opposite Galilee. And when JESUS came out onto the land he was met by a certain man from the town who had demons. For a long time he had worn no clothes, and did not live in a house, but in the tombs. He lived in the tombs, and no one could bind him any more, not even with a chain. For he had been often bound with fetters and chains, and the chains had been torn apart by him, and the fetters broken in pieces. No one had the strength to tame him. And always, night and day, in the tombs and in the mountains, he was crying out, and cutting himself with stones. When he saw JESUS, he shouted, and fell down before him, and with a loud voice said, "What do I have to do with you, JESUS, you Son of the Most High GOD? I beg you, do not torment me." For he had been saying to him, "Come out of the man, you unclean spirit." Then JESUS asked him, "What is your name?" He said, "Legion," for many demons had entered into him. They pleaded with him that he would not command them to go into the Abyss.[698] Now there was there a herd of many pigs feeding on the mountain. And they begged him, saying, "Send us into the pigs, that we may enter into them." He allowed them. The demons came out from the man, and entered into the pigs, and the herd of about two thousand marched[699] down the steep bank into the lake, and were drowned.

Then people went out to see what had happened. They came to JESUS, and found the man from who the demons had gone out, sitting at JESUS' feet, clothed and in his right mind; and they were afraid. The owners of the pigs began to plead with JESUS to leave their region. As he was entering into the boat, he who had been possessed by demons pleaded with him that he might be with him. However, JESUS did not allow him, but said to him, "Go to your house, to your own, and tell them what great things GOD has done for you, and how he had mercy on you." So he went his way, and began to proclaim in Decapolis how JESUS had done great things for him, and everyone was amazed.

After this, the crowd saw JESUS, for they were all waiting for him. And he went out, and he saw a large

---

[698] Many who read the Bible see some kind of massive war between good and evil. This comes from Zoroastrian influence and Hollywood movies. But the actual Bible has JESUS even saving a demon from being sent to the Abyss. GOD plans for all to be saved, not just all humans. It is not clear what the Abyss is. If it's a spirit world like the Du'at, maybe this demon wanted to be reincarnated? Or maybe it's a place of mostly nonbeing where creatures are subjects of collective imagination. In any case, JESUS saved him from this.

[699] This exorcism is a parable. The legion is a Roman military unit. In other words, the Jewish nation is possessed by the spirit of Roman occupation. The Jews hoped for a Messiah to free them from Roman rule, but JESUS's real plan was to set people spiritually free, not be a freedom-fighter like Barabbas.

crowd, and he had compassion on them, and healed their sick. But some of those in the crowd asked why words intended for the Jews created such disharmony if the intention was peace. So JESUS told a parable about a sower who planted grains by broadcast. And some fell by the road and the birds ate it, other fell in rocky ground and it sprang up only to be scorched by the sun and withered because it had no root, some fell in the thorns and was choked out, and some fell in good ground, and yielded good grain of low or high amounts. And he explained how like this sower, even the best message will, like those seeds, depend on the factors surrounding it.
And he preached to them of comfort, saying, " He said, "Come to me, all you who labor and are heavily burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart; and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." He also said, "No one, when he has lit a lamp, covers it with a container, or puts it under a bed; but puts it on a stand, that those who enter in may see the light. For nothing is hidden, that will not be revealed; nor anything secret, that will not be known and come to light. So consider carefully how you listen."And he had many other such sayings and parables, and the conflict before dissolved, and past hatred gave way to awe. It was about this time that Simon and John arrived.
Now evening came, and the disciples told him, "This place is desolate, and the hour is already late. Send the crowds away, that they may go into the villages, and buy themselves food." But JESUS said, "They have nowhere to go. You give them something to eat." And they said to him, "Are we to go and buy two hundred denarii worth of bread, and give them something to eat? We have no more than five loaves and two fish, unless we should go and buy food for all these people." But JESUS asked them to bring the food over. They were about five thousand men, before counting women and children. He said to his disciples, "Make them sit down in groups." And they grouped together in units of fifty or a hundred. And he took the five loaves and the two fish, and looking up to Heaven, he blessed, broke and gave the loaves to the disciples, and the disciples gave to the crowds. And Simon also distributed, for though his heart was hardened, he had faith in JESUS. And they all ate and were filled, and they took up twelve baskets full of that which remained left over from the broken pieces.[700]
And immediately he made the disciples get into the boat and to go ahead of him to the other side, while he sent the crowds away. After that, he went up the mountain to pray. When evening had come, the boat was in the midst of the sea, and he was alone on the land. The boat was battered by the waves, and no amount of rowing made any progress, for the wind was against it. At around the fourth watch of the night,[701] JESUS came to them, walking on the sea. And when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, "It's a ghost!" and they screamed with fear. But immediately JESUS spoke to them, saying "Cheer up. Do not be afraid, I AM here." Simon answered him and said, "If it is really you, command me to come to you on the waters." He said, "Do you have faith to walk on these waves? Then come. But why are you upset?" And Simon, son of Jonah[702] asked him, "You sent us to some backwater to break up tensions with Gentiles! Why?!? Our own people need you! I needed you! My wife miscarried, and where were you?" But the LORD said, "Our trials are to strengthen us, to give us character. Simon, you and your wife will indeed be helped. But I need you to focus on this trial. Can you walk towards me? Is your faith in me through this hardship?" After this, Simon stepped down from the boat, and walked on the water and went toward JESUS. And he walked several steps toward JESUS, but waves nearby began to rise, and the turmoil of the wind

---

[700] Not to belittle this miracle, but if you took a loaf of bread into vertical hunks (informal slices) and then divided those into fourths or fifths, each average loaf of bread would feed about forty or fifty people meaning about two hundred could reasonably full from just bread. This is assuming an oblong loaf not a roll. Similarly the two fish in question could range anywhere from sardines to large catfish. If we were talking about the largest possible loaves and fish, maybe you would be able to feed five hundred people fairly well. This doesn't account for about a tenfold amount, leftovers, and the fact that there are women and children beyond this. Which is why we can call this a miracle. However, it may be a miracle of giving, meaning that some of the crowd pulled out their food to help out. The closest analogy to such a thing was a church potluck. They made two bowls of salad, a few plates of dessert, some bread, and some soup for about maybe sixty or eighty people. The soup in question was half of a large kettle. They brought out dozens of bowls of soup from the campfire to the inside, and even still, we had entire jars of leftovers. After two bowls, I was pretty full myself, but I can't even imagine multiplying that by about a hundred.
[701] Traditionally, there were only three watches: beginning, middle, and morning, each about four hours. But by the New Testament, there were four watches of three hours each, starting at six at night. The fourth watch, then, was between three and six in the morning.
[702] Drawing a parallel between him and the original Jonah, who did the LORD's will but hated that the LORD favored Ninevah.

frightened him. And as he was beginning to sink, he yelled, "Master, save me!"
Immediately JESUS stretched out his hand, took hold of him, and said to him, "Oh, you of little faith, why did you doubt?" And he got into the boat with them, and the wind ceased. And they were completely profusely astonished among themselves; for they had not understood about the loaves,[703] but their hearts were hardened. Even so they worshiped him, saying, "You are the Son of GOD."
They crossed over, they came to land at Gennesaret, and moored to the shore. When they had come out of the boat, immediately the people recognized him, and ran around that whole region, and began to bring those who were sick, on their mats, to where they heard he was. Wherever he entered, into villages, or into cities, or into the country, they placed the sick in the marketplaces, and begged him that they might touch just the fringe of his garment; and everyone who touched him were made well.

CHAPTER 16

It came to pass, when the days were near that he should be taken up, he intently set his face to go to Jerusalem, and sent messengers before his face. They went, and entered into a village of the Samaritans, so as to prepare for him. But they did not receive him, because he was traveling with his face set towards Jerusalem. When his disciples, James and John, saw this, they said, "LORD, do you want us to command fire and brimstone to come from the earth,[704] and consume them as Sodom?" And he turned and rebuked them, and said, "You do not realize what kind of Spirit you belong to. For the Son of Man did not come to destroy people's lives, but to save them."
JESUS was passing along the borders of Samaria. As he entered into a certain village, ten men who were lepers met him, who stood at a distance. They lifted up their voices, saying, "JESUS, Master, have mercy on us." When he saw them, he said to them, "Go and show yourselves to the priests." It happened that as they went, they were cleansed. One of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, glorifying GOD with a loud voice. He fell on his face at JESUS' feet, giving him thanks; and he was a Samaritan. JESUS answered, "Weren't the ten cleansed? But where are the nine? Were there none found who returned to give glory to GOD, except this stranger?" Then he said to him, "Get up, and go your way. Your faith has healed you."
Now JESUS wanted to leave the area, but a woman whose young daughter had an unclean spirit heard of him and came and fell at his feet. Now the woman was a Greek, a Syrophoenician[705] by race. And started shouting, saying, "Have mercy on me, Son of David! My daughter is severely demonized." When he said nothing, she shouted all the more, "Have mercy on me, Son of David!" His disciples came and pleaded with him, saying, "Send her away, for she keeps shouting at us." But he answered, "I was not sent to anyone but the lost sheep of the house of Israel." But she came and worshiped him, saying, "JESUS, help me." But he answered, "It is not appropriate to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs." But she said, "Yes, but even the dogs eat the crumbs which fall from their masters' table." JESUS smiled. He said to her, "Woman, great is your faith. Be it done to you even as you desire. Go in peace, for the demon has gone out of your daughter." When she returned to her house, she found the child on the bed, no longer troubled by a demon.
JESUS departed from the borders of Tyre, and came through Sidon to the sea of Galilee, through the midst of the region of Decapolis.
They brought to him one who had a speech difficulty from being deaf, and they begged JESUS to lay his hand on him. He took him aside from the crowd, privately, and put his fingers into his ears, and he spat, and touched his tongue. Looking up to Heaven, he sighed, and said to him, "***Ephphatha***." which means, "Be opened." And his ears were opened, and the impediment of his tongue was released, and he spoke clearly. He commanded them that they should tell no one, but the more he commanded them, so much the more widely they proclaimed it.[706] JESUS departed there, and came near to the sea of Galilee; and he went up into the mountain, and large crowds came to him, having with them the lame, blind, mute, and others, and they put them down at his feet; and he healed them.

---

[703] The lesson of the loaves is that GOD will provide. Because they did not understand this, fear overtook them.
[704] This used to be sending fire from the sky. I also connected this to the fate of Sodom and Gomorrah.
[705] This woman was likely Samarian, which is why later there is a story of the Good Samaritan. Either JESUS was learning as his ministry went on, or this was a test, showing her how the Jewish rabbi acted.
[706] Hahaha, this is kinda funny! JESUS tells a man starved for speech for years, "Don't say anything about this," and expects him to want to keep his mouth shut.

So the crowd was amazed when they saw the mute speaking, crippled healthy, lame walking, and blind seeing. And they glorified the GOD of Israel. JESUS told the disciples, "I have compassion on the crowd, because they continue with me now three days and have nothing to eat. I do not want to send them away fasting, or they might faint on the way." There were about four thousand, and he fed them also.
One of the Pharisees invited him to eat with him. He entered into the Pharisee's house, and sat at the table. Now, a woman in the city who was a sinner, when she knew that he was reclining in the Pharisee's house, she brought an alabaster jar of ointment. Standing behind at his feet weeping, she began to wet his feet with her tears, and she wiped them with the hair of her head, kissed his feet, and anointed them with the ointment. Now when the Pharisee who had invited him saw it, he said to himself, "This man, if he were a prophet, would have perceived who and what kind of woman this is who touches him, that she is a sinner." JESUS answered him, "Simon, I have something to tell you." He said, "Teacher, say on."
He told a parable, "A certain lender had two debtors. The one owed five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. When they could not pay, he forgave them both. Which of them therefore will love him most?" Simon answered, "He, I suppose, to who he forgave the most." He said to him, "You have judged correctly." Turning to the woman, he said to Simon, "Do you see this woman? I entered into your house, and you gave me no water for my feet, but she has wet my feet with her tears, and wiped them with her hair. You gave me no kiss, but she, since the time I came in, has not ceased to kiss my feet. You did not anoint my head with oil, but she has anointed my feet with ointment. Therefore I tell you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much. But to who little is forgiven, the same loves little." He said to her, "Your sins are forgiven." And those who were reclining with him began to say to themselves, "Who is this who even forgives sins?" He said to the woman, "Your faith has saved you. Go in peace."

CHAPTER 17

Now they forgot to take bread; and they did not have more than one loaf in the boat with them. He warned them, saying, "Watch out; guard yourselves against the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees, and the yeast of Herod." They reasoned among themselves, saying, "We brought no bread." But JESUS, becoming aware of this, said, "You of little faith, why are you discussing among yourselves about having no bread? Do you still not understand? Do you not remember the five loaves for the five thousand, and how many baskets you took up? Nor the seven loaves for the four thousand, and how many baskets you took up? Why is it that you do not see that I did not speak to you concerning bread?" JESUS was speaking instead about the teaching of Herod, the Pharisees, and the Sadducees.
He came to Bethsaida. They brought a blind man to him, and begged JESUS to touch him. He took hold of the blind man by the hand, and brought him out of the village. When he had spit on his eyes, and laid his hands on him, he asked him if he saw anything. He looked up, and said, "I see people; they look like trees walking." Then again he laid his hands on his eyes. He made him look up, and was restored, and saw everything clearly. He sent him away to his house, saying, "Do not enter into the village."[707]
Now when JESUS came into the parts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, "Who do people say that I am?" They said, "Some say John the Baptist, some, Elijah, and others, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets." Simon answered, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living GOD." And JESUS answered him, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in Heaven. I also tell you that you are Peter, and on this Rock I will build my church, and the Gates of Hades[708] will not prevail against it. I will give to you the keys of the kingdom of Heaven, and whatever you bind on Earth will be bound in Heaven, and whatever you loose on Earth will be loosed in Heaven."
He began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders,

---

[707] This is part of a sandwich passage. A later passage (which might not be included) has the guy properly see the second time. This miracle is paired with the disciples "not seeing" what JESUS is saying.
[708] Caesarea Philippi was widely regarded as a thoroughly evil place, being the site of a pagan temple. It featured a limestone cave known as Banias, that in a very real way appeared to a gate to the underworld. Nearby were a set of malaria-infested Hula Marshes. True to this prophecy, these gates eventually caved in from an earthquake.

the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. He spoke to them openly. Peter took him, and began to rebuke him, "Far be it from you, LORD. This will never be done to you." But he, turning around, and seeing his disciples, rebuked Peter, and said, "Get behind me. You have in mind not the things of GOD, but the things of humans."[709]

Then JESUS said to his disciples "If anyone wants to come after me, let him deny himself, and follow me. For what does it profit a person to gain the whole world, and forfeit his soul?[710] Or what will a person give in exchange for his soul? For the Son of Man will come in the glory of his Father with his angels, and then he will render to everyone according to his deeds. Truly I tell you, there are some standing here who will in no way taste of death, until they see the Son of Man coming in his Kingdom."[711]

Six or eight days[712] after saying this, he took Peter, James, and John his brother up a high mountain to pray. As he was praying, JESUS was transfigured. His face shone like the sun, and his garments became as glistening and exceedingly white as light, such as no launderer on Earth could have lightened them. And Moses and Elijah stood with him, and they were talking with JESUS. Now Peter and those who were with him were heavy with sleep, but when they were fully awake, they saw his glory, and the two men who stood with him. Peter said to JESUS, "Rabbi, it is good for us to be here. If you want, let us make three tents here: one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah."[713] And he did not know what he was saying.

While he was still speaking, a bright cloud overshadowed them. And a voice came out of the cloud, saying, "This is my beloved Son, in who I AM well pleased. Listen to him." When the disciples heard it, they fell on their faces, and were very afraid. JESUS came and touched them and said, "Get up, and do not be afraid." Suddenly looking around, they saw no one with them anymore, except JESUS alone.

As they were coming down from the mountain, he commanded them that they should tell no one what things they had seen, until after the Son of Man had risen from the dead. They kept this saying to themselves, questioning what the "rising from the dead" meant.

As they walked down the mountain, the disciples asked him, saying, "Then why do the scribes say that Elijah must come first?" And he answered and said, "Elijah indeed comes, and will restore all things, but I tell you that Elijah has come already, and they did not recognize him, but did to him whatever they wanted to. Even so the Son of Man will also suffer by them." Then the disciples understood that he spoke to them of John the Baptist.

CHAPTER 18

It happened on the next day, when they had come down from the mountain, that a large crowd met him. And when they came to the disciples, they saw a large crowd around them, and scribes questioning them. And when they came to the crowd, a man came to him, knelt before him, and said, "LORD, have mercy on my son, for he is epileptic, and suffers severely; for he often falls into the fire, and often into the water. So I brought him to your disciples, and they could not cure him." JESUS answered, "Faithless and perverse generation. How long will I be with you? How long will I bear with you? Bring him here to me." They brought him to him, and when he saw him, immediately the spirit convulsed him, and he fell on the ground, wallowing and foaming at the mouth. He asked his father, "How long has it been since this has come to him?" He said, "From childhood." The spirit threw him down and convulsed him violently. But JESUS rebuked the unclean spirit, and healed the boy, and gave him back to his father. And when he had come into the house, his disciples asked him privately, "Why

---

[709] I merged this idea with the "for whoever would save his life will lose it, and whoever will lose his life for my sake will keep it" passage, as it was about putting Christ first. That quote had troubling suicidal or sacrificial connotations. This is about having courage to speak for JESUS, instead of trying to hide who you are. People who are not ashamed of JESUS will confess him rather than trying to win the world's approval. But I removed the above quote because it actually detracts from understanding this.

[710] People spend their lives seeking approval, instead of trying to pursue the word of GOD. They are ashamed.

[711] The resurrection is the Second Coming. Since JESUS is raised, any idea of Second Coming beyond that is garbage. Any passages that say otherwise, refer back to this.

[712] The scripture between Matthew, Mark, and Luke doesn't agree on the number of days.

[713] These booths are a reference to Sukkot, where they wandered in the wilderness. The celebration involves building booths. In other words, Peter wanted to put the occasion into a box, to take a picture. By the way, Peter, James, and John are all present in this transfiguration event. Part of why I renamed "John" as the Gospel of the Beloved, is that it is conspicuously absent from what is supposed to be his account.

could we not cast it out?" And he said to them, "This kind can come out by nothing, except by prayer and fasting."[714] JESUS said, "Truly I tell you, if you have faith the size of mustard seed, you will tell this mountain, 'Move,' and it will move. There will be nothing will be impossible for you."
He returned to Capernaum, and when he was in the house he asked them, "What were you arguing on the way?" But they were silent, for they had disputed one with another on the way about who was the greatest. And he sat down, and called the twelve; and he said to them, "If anyone wants to be first, he must be last of all, and servant of all."

CHAPTER 19

When they had come to Capernaum, those who collected the tax coins came to Peter, and said, "Does not your teacher pay the tax?" He said, "Yes." When he came into the house, JESUS anticipated him, saying, "What do you think, Simon? From who do the kings of Earth receive toll or tribute? From their children, or from strangers?" And when he said, "From strangers." JESUS said to him, "Therefore the children are exempt. But, lest we cause them to stumble, go to the sea, cast a hook, and take up the first fish that comes up. When you have opened its mouth, you will find a coin. Take that, and give it to them for me and you."
Among the Pharisees and Sadducees, some disapproved of the message of JESUS, and they sought means to trap him.[715] They sent their disciples to him, along with the Herodians, flattering him, "Teacher, we know that you are honest, and teach the way of GOD in truth, no matter who you teach, for you are not partial to anyone. Is it lawful for us to pay taxes to Caesar, or not?" But he perceived their craftiness, and said to them, "Show me the coin. Whose image and inscription are on it?" They brought a denarius.[716] He said to them, "Whose is this image and inscription?"[717] They said to him, "Caesar's." And JESUS said to them, "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's,[718] and to GOD the things that are GOD'S."
And he addressed the crowd, "These images say Caesar is a god. But just as when Moses realized Pharaoh did not even know his daughter's name, Caesar is not aware of your life. Your money can be given to you or taken from you, but who you are? This is known by GOD. Therefore, given your whole self on behalf of GOD. Now, whose coin is this again? Here it is, that you give it to Rome, where you got it." And they were utterly amazed at him, for he exposed their wickedness. For the priesthood took coins from Rome and even was loaned their ephod for the yearly Passover sacrifice.
Now all the tax collectors and sinners were coming close to him to hear him. The Pharisees and the scribes murmured, saying, "This man welcomes sinners, and eats with them." He told them this parable, "What do you think? If someone has one hundred sheep, and one of them goes astray, does he not leave the ninety-nine, go to the mountains, and seek that which has gone astray? When he has found it, he carries it on his shoulders, rejoicing. When he comes home, he calls together his friends and his neighbors, saying to them, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost.' I tell you that even so there will be more joy in Heaven over one sinner who repents, than over ninety-nine righteous people who need no repentance. Even so it is not the will of my Father who is in Heaven that one of these little ones should perish.
He spoke also this parable to certain people who were convinced of their own righteousness, and who despised all others, "Two men went up into the temple to pray; one was a Pharisee, and the other was a tax collector. The Pharisee stood and prayed to himself like this: 'GOD, I thank you, that I am not like other people, extortioners, unrighteous, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week. I give tithes of all that I get.' But the tax collector, standing far away, would not even lift up his eyes to Heaven, but beat his breast, saying, 'GOD, be merciful to me, a sinner.' I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but he who humbles himself will be exalted."

---

[714] There was a film called *First Do No Harm*, where they mentioned how a fasting diet (low sugar, high protein) was effective against epilepsy.
[715] I put all these passages together thematically. They are actually out of order
[716] Note that the Pharisees possess the coin. The Jews are guilty of collusion with Rome.
[717] The prohibition against graven images. The coin depicted Caesar as a god. And the Shema Yisrael mentions to "inscribe these words on your hearts"
[718] In Jewish law, everything including your own body belongs to GOD, while nothing belongs to Caesar. Devout Jews to not recognize foreign authority as the ultimate power in their lives.

One day, JESUS was passing through, and there was a man named Zacchaeus. He was a chief tax collector, and he was rich. He was trying to see who JESUS was, and could not because of the crowd, because he was short. He ran on ahead, and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see him, for he was to pass that way. And as he came to the place, looking up, JESUS saw him, and said to him, "Zacchaeus, hurry and come down, for today I must stay at your house." He hurried, came down, and received him joyfully. And when they saw it, they all murmured, saying, "He has gone in to lodge with a man who is a sinner." And Zacchaeus stood and said to JESUS, "LORD, half of my goods I give to the poor. If I have wrongfully exacted anything of anyone, I restore four times as much." JESUS said to him, "Today, salvation has come to this house, because he also is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man came to seek and to save that which was lost."

CHAPTER 20

John said to him, "Teacher, we saw someone casting out demons in your name; and we forbade him, because he was not following us." But JESUS said, "Do not forbid him, for there is no one who will do a mighty work in my name, and be able quickly to speak evil of me. For he who is not against you is for you."[719] JESUS continued, "If your brother sins against you, go, show him his fault between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained back your brother. But if he does not listen, take one or two more with you, that at the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church. If he refuses to hear the church also, let him be to you as an unbeliever or a tax collector. Truly I tell you, whatever you bind on Earth will be bound in Heaven, and whatever you loose on Earth will be loosed in Heaven. Again, truly I tell you, that if two of you agree on Earth concerning anything that they will ask, it will be done for them by my Father who is in Heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there I AM in the midst of them."

Then Peter came to him and said, "JESUS, how often can my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Up to seven times?" JESUS said to him, "I do not tell you up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven."[720] And JESUS told this parable that the kingdom of Heaven is like a certain king, who wanted to reconcile accounts with his servants. When the king had begun to reconcile, one was brought to him who owed him ten thousand talents. But because he could not pay, his king commanded him to be sold, with his wife and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made. The servant fell down and kneeled before him, begging the king to have patience with him. The king, being moved with compassion, released him, and forgave him the debt. But that servant went out, and found one of his fellow servants, who owed him one hundred denarii, and he grabbed him, and took him by the throat asking him to repay what he owed. So his fellow servant fell down at his feet and begged him to have patience. But he would not, but went and cast him into prison, until he should pay back that which was due. So when his fellow servants saw what was done, they were exceedingly sorry, and came and told to the king all that was done. Then his master called him in, and called him wicked, reminding him that he forgave all his debt and had mercy, but the servant did not do likewise. The king was angry, and delivered him to the tormentors, until he should pay all that was due. And JESUS told Peter, "So my Heavenly Father will also do to you, if you do not each forgive your brother his trespasses from your heart."

It happened when JESUS had finished these words, he departed from Galilee, and came into the borders of Judea beyond the Jordan. Large crowds followed him, and he healed them there. As he usually did, he was again teaching them. And Pharisees came to him, testing him, and saying to him, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce a wife for any reason?" He answered, and said, "Have you not read that he who created them from the beginning made them divided humans into two halves,[721] and said, 'For this reason a man will leave his father and mother, and be joined to his beloved,[722] and the two

---

[719] Extremists sometimes say "Whoever isn't with us is against us," but JESUS turns this on its head.

[720] Not four hundred and ninety times. The point is that you shouldn't be keeping count. This juxtaposes against the previous passage about taking a grievance to the church.

[721] Traditionally, this says male and female, but I think the fundamentalists have latched on to the physical and not that we are spirits called to love. Your other half is not about your body.

[722] Earlier, when talking about how he would set each man against his household, they have this long speech about hating your family. But I think the closer analogy is that you leave behind your mother and father to be with the one you love. Unless your family is completely toxic, actively hating them seems weird and un-Christian. I wanted to make the parallel between Eve and

will become one flesh?' So that they are no more two, but one flesh. What therefore GOD has joined together, let no one separate." They asked him, "Why then did Moses command us to give her a certificate of divorce, and divorce her?" He sighed. He said to them, "Moses, because of the hardness of your hearts, allowed you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it has not been so. I tell you that whoever divorces his wife and marries another is committing adultery, except for abuse, neglect, or sexual immorality.[723] And he who marries her when she is divorced from such a divorce commits adultery." The disciples said to him, "If this is the case of a husband with a wife, it is not expedient to marry." But he said to them, "Not everyone can receive this saying, but those to who it is given. For there are eunuchs who were born that way from their mother's womb, and there are eunuchs who were made eunuchs by men; and there are eunuchs who made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of Heaven's sake.[724] He who is able to receive it, let him receive it."

Then little children were brought to him, that he should lay his hands on them and pray; and the disciples rebuked them. But JESUS said, "Allow the little children, and do not forbid them to come to me; for the kingdom of Heaven belongs to ones like these." He placed his hands on them. He took a little child, and set him in the midst of them. And he said to them, "Whoever receives one such little child in my name, receives me, and whoever receives me, does not receive me, but him who sent me. But whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to stumble, it would be better for him that a huge millstone should be hung around his neck, and that he should be sunk in the depths of the sea. See that you do not despise one of these little ones, for I tell you that in Heaven their angels always see the face of my Father who is in Heaven."[725]

As he was going out into the way, one ran to him, knelt before him, and asked him, "Good Teacher, what must I do that I may inherit everlasting life?" JESUS said to him, "Why do you call me good? No one is good except one, GOD. You know the commandments: 'Do not commit adultery,' 'Do not murder,' 'Do not steal,' 'Do not give false testimony,' 'Do not defraud,' 'Honor your father and mother.'" And he said to him, "Teacher, I have kept all these things from my youth." JESUS looking at him grieved for him, and said to him, "One thing you lack. Go and sell whatever you have and give to the poor, and then come and follow me."[726] But his face fell at that saying, and he went away sorrowful, for he was one who had great possessions. JESUS looked around, and said to his disciples, "How difficult it is for those who have riches to enter into the Kingdom of GOD." The disciples were amazed at his words. But JESUS answered again and said to them, "Children, how hard it is for those who trust in riches to enter the kingdom of GOD. It is easier for a rope[727] to go through a needle's eye than for a rich person to enter into the Kingdom of GOD. But not only the rich. Think on this. The children of the rich are obsessed with their parent's money, even if they never inherit. The poor also live in envy of the rich. They steal or they covet, and so money that is not even theirs occupies their thoughts. Can any of these give all thoughts of wealth? Truly I tell you, you must not let your possessions possess you."[728] They were exceedingly astonished, saying to him, "Then who can be saved?" JESUS, looking at them, said, "With humans it is impossible, but not with GOD, for all things are possible with GOD."

Then Peter answered, "We have left everything, and followed you. What then will we have?" JESUS

JESUS, just as a parallel has been made of Adam and JESUS. JESUS is our Beloved.

[723] I added in abuse and neglect. A dangerous or inherently isolating marriage is no marriage at all, just as one where one partner committed adultery.

[724] Remember that passage about "If your hand offends you cut it off"? This passage makes me smirk, as it appears to be JESUS endorsing sex changes. And also because it's like, "Some are born eunuchs, and some have eunuchness thrust upon them."

[725] When I think of this passage, I think of Joe Biden, and how people deny up and down but you can see him touching kids in a way that is scary and inappropriate. Sniffing hair and groping them around the back isn't cool. There was a movie called *Sound of Freedom*, where they discussed the sex slave trade of minors. And there's all these people who want open borders, even though it perversely helps this sorta thing thrive.

[726] The problem with universalizing the gospel is that it becomes a disservice to those who need it most. JESUS isn't telling everyone to make themselves poor, though giving in love is a good thing. He was giving a message to someone with too many possessions, because his possessions were weighing him down.

[727] The New Testament is commonly assumed to be written from Greek. But there are some expressions at least that were Aramaic. Aramaic has no vowels, and a book that suggested this was from there said that word is "rope" not "camel."

[728] There is a leftist mindset that Christianity means everyone who is "rich" must give up all their wealth. But I'm calling out that what is really behind this interpretation is envy. Whether rich or poor, if you spend all of your life fixated on keeping up with the Jones, your thoughts are not on Heaven. This isn't about the offering, but about the attachment.

said to them, "Truly I tell you that you who have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of Man will sit on the throne of his glory, you also will sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. Everyone who has left things behind for my name's sake, will inherit everlasting life. So the last will be first, and the first last; for many are called, but few are chosen."
As they went on their way, he entered into a certain village, and a certain woman named Martha received him. She was attracted to JESUS, and invited him to her house in order to speak to him. She had a sister called Mary, who also sat at JESUS's feet, and heard his word. But Martha was distracted with much serving, and seeing her sister take his attention, she became jealous. So she came up to him, and said, "Do you not care that my sister left me to serve alone? Ask her therefore to help me." But JESUS answered and said to her, "Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things, but one thing is needed. Mary has chosen the good part, which will not be taken away from her." The gesture of serving his disciples and him was kind, but this was the time for teaching. And he instructed her to sit and rest while he taught, telling her that to sit in companionship with him was a meal of its own, as nourishing as food. Later, he and his disciples served her dinner. And everyone broke bread, drank wine, and talked all night together.

CHAPTER 21

It happened, that when he finished praying in a certain place, one of his disciples said to him, "LORD, teach us to pray, just as John also taught his disciples." So he taught them what is now known as the LORD's Prayer.
He also spoke a parable to them that they must always pray, and not give up, telling about an unjust judge who did not fear GOD and did not respect people. And a widow was in that city, and she often came to him asking for justice and he would not, but eventually he decided that she would never leave him alone otherwise. JESUS explained, "Won't GOD also do for us, who are crying out to him day and night, and yet he exercises patience with them? I tell you that he will answer them quickly." He also told them a parable about a man who was going on a journey and asked his friend at midnight to give him bread. Even if he didn't want to give it, because of his persistence, he would grant his request.
He continued, "I tell you, ask, and it will be given to you. Seek, and you will find. Knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives. He who seeks finds. To him who knocks it will be opened." And JESUS continued, "Which of you fathers, if your son asks for a fish, he won't give him a snake instead of a fish, will he? Or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Heavenly Father give the *Ruach ha Kodesh* to those who ask him?"
He went on his way through cities and villages, teaching, and traveling on to Jerusalem. One from the crowd said to him, "LORD, are they few who are saved?" He said to them, "The Way to the Kingdom is very broad and easy to follow. But the people always look for shortcuts. And these other paths are more difficult and dangerous, where wolves snatch up the children to eat, and where bandits seek to steal. Stay on the broad path, and don't seek these shortcuts! For you will become lost, and you will cry out, 'LORD, where you?' But it will be difficult for you to reach him.[729] And great will be your shame, when you see Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and the prophets in the Kingdom of GOD, and yet you wander for forty years.[730] They will come from the east, west, north, and south, and will sit down in the Kingdom of GOD."[731]
It came to pass, as he said these things, a certain woman out of the crowd lifted up her voice, and said to him, "Blessed is the womb that bore you, and the breasts which nursed you." But he said, "On the contrary, blessed are those who hear the word of GOD, and keep it."[732]
And someone in the crowd said to him, "Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me." But he said to him, "Man, who made me a judge or an arbitrator over you?" He said to them,

---

[729] Originally the text mentions a "narrow door" but I think that feeds into fundamentalism and Judaizer mentality. This image, seemingly opposite, is from the *Tao te Ching*.
[730] Like those punished after Moses liberated the Jews from Egypt.
[731] This seems to coordinate with a later passage about being shamed at a party. It is not, therefore, eternal condemnation but humiliation.
[732] Catholicism places the blessing on Mary, but JESUS rebukes this teaching. We worship GOD, we don't try to make a "Mother of GOD" teaching.

"Beware. Keep yourselves from all covetousness, for a man's life does not consist of the abundance of the things which he possesses." He spoke a parable to them, about a rich man whose land produced great plenty, and he wanted to tear down his barns to build bigger barns. But that very night, GOD demanded his life. And so all he had prepared was in vain.[733] JESUS said, "So is any who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward GOD. Do not pursue your inheritance, instead help the widows and orphans, be an ally to the needy. Thus you make for yourselves purses which do not grow old, a prize in Heaven that does not fail." And Peter said, "LORD, are you telling this parable to us, or to everyone?" JESUS said, "Who then is the faithful and wise steward, who his LORD will set over his household, to give them their portion of food at the right time? Blessed is that servant who his LORD will find doing so when he comes. But a servant who knew his LORD's will, and did not prepare or do what he wanted, will be beaten with many stripes. To whoever much is given, of him will much be required; and to who much was entrusted, of him more will be asked." He also told of a woman who had ten coins, but lost one, sweeping her house to find that one, and when she found it, she invited all of her friends. JESUS said, "I tell you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of GOD over even one sinner repenting."

And he said, "A certain man had two sons.[734] The younger of them said to his father, 'Father, give me my share of your property.' He divided his livelihood between them. Not many days after, the younger son gathered all of this together and traveled into a far country. There he wasted his property with riotous living. When he had spent all of it, there arose a severe famine in that country, and he began to be in need. He went and joined himself to one of the citizens of that country, and he sent him into his fields to feed pigs. And he wanted to fill himself with the carob pods that the pigs ate, but no one gave him any. But when he came to himself he said, 'How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough to spare, and I'm dying here with hunger. I will get up and go to my father, and will tell him, that I have sinned against Heaven, and in his sight. I am no longer worthy to be called his son, and to make me like one of his hired servants.' He arose, and came to his father. But while he was still far off, his father saw him, and was moved with compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him. The son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against Heaven, and in your sight. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.' But the father said to his servants, 'Quickly, bring out the best robe, and put it on him. Put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet. Bring the fattened calf, kill it, and let us eat, and celebrate; for this, my son, was dead, and is alive again. He was lost, and is found.' They began to celebrate. Now his elder son was in the field. As he came near to the house, he heard music and dancing. He called one of the servants to him, and asked what was going on. He said to him, 'Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fattened calf, because he has received him back safe and healthy.' But he was angry, and would not go in. Therefore his father came out, and pleaded with him. But he answered his father, 'These many years I have served you, and I never disobeyed a commandment of yours, but you never gave me a goat, that I might celebrate with my friends. But when this son of yours came, who has devoured your living with prostitutes, you killed the fattened calf for him.' He said to him, 'Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. But it was appropriate to celebrate and be glad, for this brother of yours was dead and is alive; and he was lost, and is found.'"[735]

He also said to his disciples, "There was a certain rich man who had a manager. An accusation was made to him that this man was wasting his possessions. He called him, and said to him, 'What is this that I hear about you? Give an accounting of your management, for you can no longer be manager.' "The manager said within himself, 'What will I do, seeing that my LORD is taking away the management position from me? I do not have strength to dig. I am ashamed to beg. I know what I

---

[733] You see this thing play out in modern society. People spent most of their effort working their entire lives. Nobody is there to inherit from them, so it's just so much vanity. They die and it gets given to people they don't even like. Much of this is mentioned in Ecclesiastes.

[734] This story is found in Buddhism, meaning there at one time was some relation between the two religions. According to a legend, the Buddha predicted the coming of a future Buddha (Maitreya Buddha). JESUS, during his missing years, could have traveled east, or have learned from the Magi.

[735] The older brother is Judaism. They are the chosen people, who always tried to do GOD'S will. JESUS is speaking about the Gentiles that his disciples will later call to be followers. These are people who have come to JESUS after a life of regret. Yet like Jonah with the Ninevites, the Jews have the "sign of Jonah" because they resent that GOD wants them saved.

will do, so that when I am removed from management, they may receive me into their houses.'
Calling each one of his LORD's debtors to him, he said to the first, 'How much do you owe to my LORD?' He said, 'A hundred batos of oil.' He said to him, 'Take your bill, and sit down quickly and write fifty.' Then he said to another, 'How much do you owe?' He said, 'A hundred cors of wheat.' He said to him, 'Take your bill, and write eighty.' His LORD commended the dishonest manager for his shrewdness, for the people of this age are more shrewd in dealing with their own generation than the people of light. And I say to you, make friends for yourselves by means of unrighteous mammon, so that when it is gone they may welcome you into the everlasting dwellings. He who is faithful in a very little is faithful also in much. He who is dishonest in a very little is also dishonest in much. If therefore you have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches? If you have not been faithful in that which is the property of another, who will give you that which is your own?"[736]
The Pharisees also heard all these things, and they scoffed at him. He said to them, "You are those who justify yourselves in the sight of people, but GOD knows your hearts. For that which is exalted among people is an abomination in the sight of GOD. The law and the prophets were until John. From that time the Good News of the Kingdom of GOD is preached, and everyone is forcing his way into it. But it is easier for Heaven and Earth to pass away, than for one tiny stroke of a pen in the law to become void."
And he told them a parable, "There was a rich man named Nifrad.[737] He wore fine clothes of purple and lived in luxury. Outside his gate there was a certain beggar named Lazarus.[738] Now Nifrad knew Lazarus's name, but in life he distanced himself from the beggar. For Lazarus was covered with sores, and the dogs came and licked him. Lazarus likewise also knew of the rich man, and desired even the crumbs that fell from his table. Time passed, and both the rich man and Lazarus died, and both went to Sheol. Lazarus was carried away by the angels to Abraham's bosom. The rich man awoke and Sheol in torment, and looking above him, he saw Abraham comforting Lazarus, while he was in pain.[739] So he called out and said, 'Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue. For I am in anguish.' But Abraham said, 'Son, remember that you in your lifetime, received your good things, and you used these things to separate yourself from the man you could see suffering outside your house. You distracted yourself from you own guilt with fine things, and you have built a chasm between you and him. Now these things are gone, and the guilt you had over the plight of Lazarus is tormenting you. So now, I am comforting him, and even if Lazarus agreed to your request, you have isolated yourself so that he cannot reach you.' And the rich man bemoaned the life he had built for himself. He said, 'If only this chasm can be bridged! If I cannot be helped, I ask that you raise him from the dead. Send him to my father's house, because I have five brothers. Let him testify to them, so they won't also suffer as I do.' But Abraham said to him, 'They have Moses and the Prophets. Let them listen to them.' He said, 'No they are as bad as I am. But Father Abraham, if one goes to them from the dead, maybe they will repent.' He said to him, 'If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be persuaded if one rises from the dead.'"[740]

CHAPTER 22

The twelve said to JESUS, "Increase our faith." JESUS said, "If you had faith like a grain of mustard seed, you would tell this mulberry tree, 'Be uprooted, and be planted in the sea,' and it would obey

---

[736] I lumped multiple passages about money or wealth together, mainly to show that what GOD values, and what humans call worth are totally different. You shouldn't waste your life in pursuit of wealth but try to make it work by turning your life around. These all seem to be comparing use of time and justice against wealth.
[737] Meaning "separate/set apart." The implication that the Jews are set apart as chosen people, but the rich man isolates himself from the poor man.
[738] Meaning "GOD has helped."
[739] This is sometimes used to "prove" Hell. But notice, the rich man and Lazarus are in the same room. In other words, this is the Afterlife, and the situation is reversed from what it was in life. But this situation cannot be eternal, or Lazarus would be forever in the position of the rich man. Rather, it must be until the rich man and Lazarus understand each other. I believe that GOD desires understanding and relationship, not punishment. Originally, there was talk about a gulf between them, but that's kinda more of the same.
[740] JESUS is making an offhand remark about his own death and resurrection, and how the Jews still don't accept him.

you." And he told his disciples a parable of how if they had a servant to help plow or keep sheep, they would not ask their servant to come immediately and sit at the time, but instead ask him to prepare their supper, dress properly and serve the master before attending their own needs. And they do not bother to thank the servant. He said, "Even so you also, when you have done all the things that are commanded you, say, 'We are unworthy servants. We have done our duty.'"[741]
The Pharisees nearby asked JESUS when the Kingdom of GOD would come, and he answered them, "The Kingdom of GOD does not come with observation; neither will they say, 'Look here' or 'Look there' for the Kingdom of GOD is within you."
He said to the disciples, "The days will come, when you will desire to see one of the days of the Son of Man, and you will not see it. And they will tell you where they think he is. Do not go away, nor follow after them, for as the lightning, when it flashes out of the one part under the sky, shines to the other part under the sky; so will the Son of Man be in his day."[742] They, answering, asked him, "Where, LORD?" He said to them, "Where the body is, there will the vultures also be gathered together."
Then he took the twelve aside, and said to them, "We are going up to Jerusalem, and all the things that are written through the prophets concerning the Son of Man will be completed. For he will be delivered up to the non-Jews, will be mocked, treated shamefully, and spit on. They will scourge and kill him. On the third day, he will rise again." But they did not understand this saying. It was concealed from them, that they should not perceive it, and they were afraid to ask him about this saying. And they were exceedingly sorry.

CHAPTER 23

They were on the way, going up to Jerusalem; and JESUS was going in front of them, and they were amazed; and those who followed were afraid. He again took the twelve, and began to tell them the things that were going to happen to him. "We are going up to Jerusalem. The Son of Man will be delivered to the chief priests and the scribes. They will condemn him to death, and will deliver him to foreigners. They will mock him, spit on him, scourge him, and kill him. After three days he will rise again."
James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came near to him (at the request of their mother), and said to him, "Teacher, we want you to do for us whatever we will ask." He said to them, "What do you want me to do for you?" They said to him, "Grant to us that we may sit, one at your right hand, and one at your left hand, in your glory." But JESUS said to them, "You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, or to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?" And they said to him, "We are able." And JESUS said to them, "You will drink the cup I drink, and you will be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with.[743] But to sit at my right hand and at my left hand is not mine to give, but for who it has been prepared." When the ten heard it, the other disciples began to be indignant towards James and John. JESUS summoned them, and said to them, "You know that they who are recognized as rulers over the nations oppress[744] them, and are called 'benefactors.' But it will not be so among you, but whoever wants to become great among you must through love be slave of all. Indeed, those who rule over states have no business passing laws and taxes, but lower themselves to please others, even to be like a prostitute.[745] For the Son of Man also did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many. For by serving others, he will bring GOD's justice."
They came to Jericho. As he went out from Jericho, with his disciples and a large crowd, Bartimaeus, the son of Timaeus, a blind beggar, was sitting by the road. When he heard that it was JESUS the Nazarene, he began to cry out, and say, "JESUS, Son of David, have mercy on me." Many rebuked him,

---

[741] I'm reminded of the Nazi excuse, "We were only following orders."
[742] Lightning flashes all across the sky. The Son of Man (JESUS) is everywhere.
[743] By this he means they will also be martyred. Again, the lie of Revelation hinges on the idea that John did not die with his brother James. But if that's not true...
[744] "Turn the other cheek" is often quoted as JESUS's prime teaching, mostly by abusers who want Christians as easy targets. But this is JESUS's teaching against the world that elects kings to oppress others. The disciples of JESUS should stop with the church hierarchy.
[745] One of the things that I believe is that state leaders should be committed to serving of the public, but very corrupt. They should be sober and love the people, but literally engage in literal prostitution, so people recognize them from the brothel and none will accept their claims of moral superiority

that he should be quiet, but he shouted all the louder, "Son of David, have mercy on me." JESUS stood still, and said, "Call him." They called the blind man, saying to him, "Cheer up. Get up. He is calling you." Casting away his coat, he jumped up and came to JESUS. And he did not notice that he had already received his sight, for he came to JESUS without reservation. JESUS asked him, "What do you want me to do for you?" The blind man said to him, "Rabboni, that I may see again." JESUS said to him, "Go your way. Your faith has made you well." At this point, he noticed that he had already received his sight, and followed JESUS on the road.

CHAPTER 24

When they drew near to Jerusalem, and came to Bethphage, to the Mount of Olives, then JESUS sent two disciples, and said to them, "Go your way into the village that is opposite you. Immediately as you enter into it, you will find a young donkey tied, on which no one has yet sat. Untie him, and bring him. If anyone asks you, 'Why are you doing this?' say, 'Because the Son of Man needs it,' and he will send it back here at once." They went away, and found a donkey colt tied at the door outside in the open street, and they untied him. And a woman who stood there asked them, "What are you doing, untying the young donkey?" They said to her just as JESUS had said, and she let them go. The disciples went, and did just as JESUS directed them, and brought the donkey and the colt, and placed their clothes on them, and he sat on them. This is to fulfill the prophecy, "Rejoice greatly, daughter of Zion! Shout in triumph, daughter of Jerusalem! See, your King comes to you, righteous and victorious, humble and riding on a donkey."

A very large crowd spread their clothes on the road. Others cut branches from the trees, and spread them on the road. Those who went in front, and those who followed, shouted, "Hosanna. Blessed who comes in the name of GOD. Blessed is the kingdom of our father David. Hosanna in the highest." When he had come into Jerusalem, all the city was stirred up, saying, "Who is this?" The crowds said, "This is the prophet JESUS, from Nazareth of Galilee." Some of the Pharisees from the crowd said to him, "Teacher, rebuke your disciples." He answered them, "I tell you that if these were silent, the stones would cry out." And indeed, the ground echoed with their voices.

When he drew near Jerusalem, he saw the city and wept over it, saying, "If you, even you, had known today the things that make for peace. But now, they are hidden from your eyes. For the days will come on you, when your enemies will throw up a barricade against you, surround you, hem you in on every side, and will dash you and your children within you to the ground. They will not leave in you one stone on another, because you did not know the time of your visitation."[746]

When evening came, JESUS went out of the city, to Bethany and lodged there, for he had friends to lodge with. And as he left the city, he was hungry. Seeing a fig tree by the road, he came to it, and found nothing on it but leaves, for it was not the season for figs. He said to it, "Let there be no fruit from you forever." In the morning when he returned to Jerusalem, the fig tree withered away all the way to the roots. When the disciples saw it, they were amazed, saying, "How did the fig tree immediately wither away?" But Peter, remembering, said to him, "Teacher, look. The fig tree which you cursed has withered away." JESUS answered them, "Truly I tell you, if you have faith and do not doubt, you will not only do what was done to the fig tree, but all things, whatever you ask in prayer, believing, you will receive."

But he told a parable about the fig tree, "But what do you think? A man had two sons, and he came to the first, and said, 'Son, go work today in the vineyard.' He answered, 'I will not,' but afterward he changed his mind, and went. And he came to the other, and said the same thing. And he answered and said, 'I go, sir,' but he did not go. Which of the two did the will of his father?" They said, "The first." He pointed then to the fig tree and how it had not given fruit.

CHAPTER 25

And JESUS told parables to the crowds.

He talked about a landowner who went out early in the morner to hire laborers for a vineyard. He offered one denarius a day and sent them to the area. But needing more, he went out again and again, and seeing workers idle, he also told them to go to work for him. He even found workers an hour before work ended, and finding them still waiting, he asked what they were doing there, and they told

[746] This passage is used as a "contradiction" against the New Testament. But an outer wall of a temple is not the temple itself.

him that it was because nobody had hired them. Then in the evening, the landowner called all of them together and paid them each a denarius. But the workers complained at this, saying the last had only endured one hour, but the first had to endure hard work and scorching heat. The landowner defended his actions, as it was his right to use his property as he pleased.[747]
Then he talked about a certain king, who made a marriage feast for his son, and sent out his servants to call those who were invited to the marriage feast, but they would not come. He asked his servant again to tell the guests that he had made his dinner ready and slaughtered the fatted calves. But they blew it off and returned to their business. And one of them took the servants, mistreated them, and killed them. The king was enraged, and sent his armies, destroyed those murderers, and burned their city. Then he said to his servants that the wedding was ready, but those who invited weren't worthy. So he told them to find any they could see to come to the wedding. So those servants went out into the highways and gathered together all they found, bad and good, to replace the guests.[748]
He talked about a man who planted a vineyard, put a hedge around it, dug a pit for a winepress, built a tower, hired tenants, and went on a journey. The tenants took their share of the fruit, but when it was time for the landowner to collect, he sent his servants only to find that they were beaten and sent away empty. He sent another servant and this one was treated shamefully and wounded in the head. And he sent another and he was killed, then he sent still others, and some were merely beaten but others were killed. He had one left, his son, and he sent him thinking that surely they'd respect him. But they dreamed of inheriting the land[749] and reasoned that killing him would give them the inheritance. They took him, killed him, and threw him to the outside of the vineyard. And JESUS asked the crowds (to which Pharisees were among), "What therefore will the master of the vineyard do?" They told him, "He will utterly destroy those evil men, and will lease out the vineyard to other tenants, who will give him the fruit in its season."[750] But he looked at them, and said, "Then what is this that is written, 'The stone[751] which the builders rejected, the same was made the chief cornerstone. It is marvelous in our eyes.' Therefore I tell you, the Kingdom of GOD will be taken away from you, and will be given to a nation bringing forth its fruit. He who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces; but on whoever it will fall, it will crush him."
JESUS also told a parable about ten virgins. There was a wedding and they took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. Now five of the were foolish, and took no oil with their lamps. When the bridegroom delayed,[752] all of them went to sleep. But at midnight they received word of the bridegroom's arrival. And they trimmed their lamps but the foolish ones noticed their lamps were going out, and asked the wise ones to share. But the wise virgins refused to share, claiming there would not be enough, and that they should go out and buy more. While they went away to buy, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the marriage feast, and the door was shut. Afterward the other virgins also came, asking them to open the door. But the door was fastened shut. JESUS said, "Watch therefore, for you do not know the day nor the hour."[753]
JESUS told the parable about a man going on a journey with three servants. To one, he gave five talents, to another two, and to another only one. The man was unjust, profiting from *their* work rather than his own, but he was just in his reward of merit.[754] And the one who received five talents

---

[747] JESUS is saying that no matter how much or as little as you do, there will never be more or less than GOD'S reward. Grace and the afterlife cannot be increased by good works. Neither should we be jealous of those who seem not to deserve Heaven. The denarius symbolizes the soul in Heaven. Also, being able to choose terms is proof that JESUS isn't speaking of some sort of kingdom of human fairness (socialism) but one where the employer (GOD) has the right to set terms, as in a capitalism.
[748] Contrast this with the Chapter 13 version of the same passage. In this one, he actually kills the guests, whereas before it was about everyone invited.
[749] Ummmm, killing the landlord's son is not how inheritance works. The wicked tenants are not only represent the Pharisees but also secular leaders. They seek to usurp the kingdom that JESUS owns by birth. There is a sort of anarchist undercurrent of JESUS's teaching.
[750] I reject any apocalyptic readings on this passage though. It's too much the same sort of issue the Pharisees wanted for those they hated.
[751] Scandal means "stumbling block." The gospel is viewed as a scandal to the Jews.
[752] Interesting how the virgins are blamed for being foolish, when in fact the bridegroom dawdled.
[753] The problem of this story is that while on the surface this is about readiness, in actual fact, the wise women lacked compassion. So did the bridegroom.
[754] I wanted to squarely separate the later message from some kind of Marxism. Marxism takes what is not earned, but Marxism also gives to those who do not earn it.

immediately went and speculated with it, and made another five talents. So also the one with two talents used money in business to make more money. But the one who had only one talent went and saved it, digging a hole into the ground. The man returned and settled accounts with the servants. And the first showed him how he had doubled his money through risk. Likewise, the man with two talents showed how he had managed to double his money through business. The master praised these two and offered them more authority than before. But the man who had only one talent pointed out that he was an unjust man, and that he collected profit from things that he did not work on, and then gave him back his talent. But the master called the servant wicked because he did not risk another's money, and said to the servant that he should have given it to bankers and then he would have his own money back but with interest.[755] Then the master took the one talent from that servant and gave it to the one who had ten. JESUS said, "For everyone who has, more will be given and he will have abundance, but from him who does not have, even what little he has will be taken away."[756]
JESUS said, "When the Judge of this world[757] comes in Heaven, and all the angels with him, he will sit on the throne. Before him all the nations will be gathered, and he will separate them one from another, as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. He will set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. Then he will tell those on his right hand, 'Come, inherit the share prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry, and you gave me food to eat. I was thirsty, and you gave me drink. I was a stranger, and you took me in. I was naked, and you clothed me. I was sick, and you visited me. I was in prison, and you came to me.' Then the righteous will answer him, saying, 'When did we see you hungry, and feed you; or thirsty, and give you a drink? When did we see you as a stranger, and take you in; or naked, and clothe you? When did we see you sick, or in prison, and come to you?' The Judge will answer them, 'Truly I tell you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.' Then he will say also to those on the left hand, 'Depart from me, you cursed, into the fire which is prepared for Satan and his angels; for I was hungry, and you did not give me food to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave me no drink; I was a stranger, and you did not take me in; naked, and you did not clothe me; sick, and in prison, and you did not visit me.' Then they will also answer, saying, 'When did we see you hungry, or thirsty, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not help you?' Then he will answer them, saying, 'Truly I tell you, inasmuch as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me.'"[758]
Now, these parables were ostensibly about awaiting the kingdom of GOD, but they were told to the Pharisees. The Pharisees had made for themselves an image of a false GOD from the law of Moses. The parables showed the difference between a kingdom built in mercy, and a kingdom of sacrifice. So when the chief priests and the Pharisees heard his parables, they perceived that he spoke about them. When they sought to seize him, they feared the crowds, because they considered him to be a prophet. And so, they watched him, and sent out spies, that they might trap him in something he said, so as to deliver him up to the power and authority of the governor.
There came to him Sadducees, who say that there is no resurrection. They asked him, saying, "Teacher, Moses wrote to us, 'If a man's brother dies, and leaves a wife behind him, and leaves no children, that his brother should take the wife, and raise up offspring for his brother.' There were seven brothers. The first took a wife, and dying left no offspring. The second took her, and died, leaving no children behind him. The third likewise; and the seven left no children. Last of all the woman also died. In the resurrection, when they rise, whose wife will she be of them? For the seven had her as a wife."[759] But JESUS answered them, "You are mistaken, not knowing the scriptures, nor

---

[755] This usury would have been unlawful to Jews. This master is unjust, as the servant himself says. Though his negative attitude doesn't help him much.
[756] Modern Christians often expend platitudes to explain that this passage is about making the most of merits, but Jews would not have seen it this way, instead agreeing with the servant that this "master" is rapacious and not at all like GOD.
[757] This passage appears at first to be apocalyptic. However, JESUS has been talking about unjust masters. He is comparing the Pharisee's notion of GOD as an avenger to what they think GOD will do when he comes. In actuality, JESUS says that he has come to save the world, not judge it. There is merit in service though.
[758] Indeed, there is an importance to giving in love. But this parable is told with GOD separating the entire world like the Pharisees would want, with worthy and unworthy people. We are told multiple times throughout the Bible though, that not one of us are worthy before GOD. This, then, is a parable against their sense of justice, hence calling GOD the Judge. Love of giving is quite different from terms like "duty," "altruism," or "charity."
[759] This referred to a law that if a man wasn't able to give his wife children, his brother could marry him.

the power of GOD. For in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are like the angels in Heaven. But concerning the resurrection of the dead, have you not read that which was spoken to you by GOD, saying, 'I AM the GOD of Abraham, and the GOD of Isaac, and the GOD of Jacob?' GOD is not the GOD of the dead, but of the living." While the Sadducees were satisfied, at these words others were confused. A Pharisee wondered, "Did not GOD make male and female in his image? How then can human beings be like angels in Heaven? Is the presence of GOD not a place of joy and wonder? If so, how can man be without the pleasure of procreation?" And another, a Nabatean trader,[760] asked, "We leave goods at our gravesites in hopes that those who have died can enjoy the same pleasures as they did while living. And my cousin's brother's son's friend says that when a man dies, he will be rewarded with seventy-two virgins."[761] Now the word he used for 'virgin' was strange, and JESUS asked, "Raisins?"[762] After the man explained, JESUS answered, "You believe that you continue your life with your friends and family, correct? Clearly this is your real belief and not what this friend tells you, is it not? Otherwise, you would not wish them to leave trinkets for after your death." At this, the Sadducees scoffed, but said nothing, as he had satisfied their previous question. JESUS continued, "Everyone, listen to me carefully. Let us ignore for a moment the implication that you can take things with you, and focus instead on relationships. Suppose your wife was married to you by arrangement. She might not like you, much less love you. She might fail to measure up to your ideal of marriage. Likewise, your love of her is imperfect. Yet the love that the LORD gives us is the ideal for married life, but what you hope for with a lover is impossible to fulfill in this life. You will indeed have memories of family and friends in the hereafter, but they too will pale in comparison to what is planned for you. 'Therefore a man will leave his father and his mother, and will join with his BELOVED, and the two will become one flesh.' Whether you believe there is life after this one, you no longer are part of the physical world when you die. And so it is that you will not have a body suitable for physical love but spiritual love."

And one of the scribes came, and heard them questioning together. Seeing that he had answered them well, asked him, "Which commandment is the greatest of all?" JESUS answered, "The first is, 'Hear, Israel, the LORD our GOD, GOD is one. And you are to love the LORD your GOD with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength.' The second is this, 'You are to love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these." The scribe said to him, "Truly, Teacher, you have said well. This is more important than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices." When JESUS saw that he answered wisely, he said to him, "You are not far from the Kingdom of GOD. You have answered correctly. Do this, and you will live." And the man himself was pleased, but he had been ordered by his superiors to test JESUS, so he searched for a question. He asked JESUS, "Who is my neighbor?" JESUS answered, "A certain man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and he fell among robbers, who both stripped him and beat him, and departed, leaving him half dead. By chance a certain priest was going down that way. When he saw him, he passed by on the other side. In the same way a Levite also, when he came to the place, and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a certain Samaritan, as he traveled, came where he was. When he saw him, he was moved with compassion, came to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. He set him on his own animal, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him. On the next day, he took out two denarii, and gave them to the host, and said to him, 'Take care of him. Whatever you spend beyond that, I will repay you when I return.' Now which of these three do you think seemed to be a neighbor to him who fell among the robbers?" He said, "He who showed mercy."[763] Then JESUS said to him, "Go and do

---

[760] The Nabateans were groups of Bedouins, largely involved with the Jews in trade. They raised goats and camels. These were divided into two groups, the Yemenis, who claimed descendance from someone named Joktan, and the Qaysis who claimed descent from Ishmael.

[761] The Nabateans or Bedouins eventually became Muslims, but this is more than likely not a belief that existed at the time. Offerings in funeral sites appears to be the extent of their belief in the afterlife. This is a response to later Islam, not necessarily its origin.

[762] The word in Aramaic would have meant "white" which can refer to white raisins or virgins.

[763] This parable is misused to support kindness to who are barely deserving of kindness (often radicals or illegal immigrants). But there is an important distinction here. We are supposed to show mercy to even people we are normally going to consider our enemies, when they are in real pain. But JESUS did not say the robbers were good neighbors. We can love anyone and be kind to anyone, even demons themselves. For GOD wants all the world to be redeemed from evil. But we ought not to help them hurt others! To reform the evil and protect the goodness of the Earth, this is what it means to follow Christ.

likewise."
Now while the Pharisees were gathered together, JESUS asked them a question, saying, "What do you think of the Christ? Whose son is this?" They said to him, "Of David." He said to them, "How then does David in the Spirit call him LORD, saying, 'The LORD said to my lord, sit on my right hand, until I make your enemies the footstool of your feet'? If then David calls him LORD, how is he his son?" And no one was able to answer him a word, neither did anyone dare ask him any more questions from that day forth.

CHAPTER 26

The common people heard him gladly. In his teaching he said to them, "Beware of the scribes, who like to walk in long robes, and to get greetings in the marketplaces, and the best seats in the synagogues, and the best places at feasts: those who devour widows' houses, and for a pretense make long prayers. These will receive greater condemnation."[764] JESUS spoke to the crowds and to his disciples, saying, "Upon the seat of Moses the Pharisees and scribes sit. All which they will say unto you, observe and do; but do not follow their actions, because they bind heavy and hard to bear burdens of law, and lay them on people's shoulders. But they themselves will not lift a finger to help others. But all their works they do to be seen by others. They make their *tefillin* broad and enlarge the fringe of their garments, and love the place of honor at feasts, the best seats in the synagogues, the salutations in the marketplaces, and to be called 'Rabbi' by people. But you are not to be called 'Rabbi,' for one is your Teacher, and all of you are brothers. Call no man on Earth your father, for one is your Father, he who is in Heaven. Neither be called masters, for one is your master, the Christ. But he who is greatest among you will serve. Whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted. Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees. For you devour the houses of widows, and for show make long prayers. Therefore you will receive greater condemnation."
JESUS at that moment saw many wealthy give large offerings to the temple, but a widow was convinced to give up all that she had, only two small coins. It was as though they stole it from her themselves.[765] And JESUS pointed to this, "Woe to you, hypocrites. For you shut up the kingdom of Heaven in front of people; for you do not enter in yourselves, neither do you allow those who are entering in to enter. Woe to you. For you travel around by sea and land to make one proselyte; and when he becomes one, you make him twice as much of a sinner as yourselves. Woe to you, you blind guides, who say, 'Whoever swears by the temple, it is nothing; but whoever swears by the gold of the temple, he is obligated.' You blind fools. For which is greater, the gold, or the temple that sanctified the gold? 'Whoever swears by the altar, it is nothing; but whoever swears by the gift that is on it, he is obligated?' Woe then to you, for you tithe mint, dill, and cumin, and have left undone the weightier matters of the law: justice, mercy, and faith. But you ought to have done these, and not to have left the other undone. You blind guides, who strain out a gnat, and swallow a camel. Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites. For you clean the outside of the cup and the plate, but within they are full of extortion and self-indulgence. You blind Pharisee, first clean the inside of the cup and the plate, so that the outside may become clean also. Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites. You outwardly appear righteous to people, but inwardly you are full of hypocrisy and iniquity. For you build the tombs of the prophets, and decorate the tombs of the righteous, and say, 'If we had lived in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets.' But you are like whitewashed tombs yourselves, which outwardly appear beautiful, but inwardly are full of dead people's bones, and of all uncleanness..[766] Therefore you testify to yourselves that you are

---

[764] Calling back to "beware the leaven of the Pharisees." I decided that I reject the idea of eternal punishment for temporal crimes. JESUS here says "greater condemnation" which I chose to leave. Rather than punishing a person forever, flames burn away impurities.
[765] I don't think much of tithing. It's one thing if the wealthy want to help the poor. But think about this: if a rich man gives one tenth of what he has, he might earn that and more, so it's sustainable. But if a man who has little gives a tenth, it makes a impact between a roof over his head and food. And temples say stuff like "The LORD loves a cheerful giver." Yes, but even if you were cheerful about giving, you shouldn't be convinced that GOD wants your money. The poor shouldn't be talked into tithing! If you want to give, yes, that's fine. But, some people think they *ought* to give. This women's gift is a tragedy, not a model for behavior. Temples need to *help* the poor, not convince them to give their all.
[766] It is hard to understand what JESUS is ranting about. In JESUS's day, there were a number of cleanliness laws that basically meant that the Jews couldn't or rather wouldn't help the poor, the hungry, the sick (especially leprous), and those regarded as

children of those who killed the prophets.."
JESUS continued, "Fill up, then, the measure of your fathers. You serpents, you offspring of vipers, how will you escape the judgement to come? Therefore, I send to you prophets, wise people, and scribes. Some of them you will kill and crucify; and some of them you will scourge in your synagogues, and persecute from city to city; that on you may come all the righteous blood shed on Earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah, who you killed between the sanctuary and the altar. Truly I tell you, all these things will come upon this generation. Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who kills the prophets, and stones those who are sent to her. How often I would have gathered your children together, even as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you would not. Your house is abandoned to you. For I tell you, soon you will not see me from now on, until you say, 'Blessed who comes in the name of the LORD.'" With this, he left the temple.

CHAPTER 27

JESUS was going on his way. His disciples came to him to show him the buildings of the temple, and how it was decorated with beautiful stones, he said to them, "Do you not see all of these things? Truly I tell you, there will be left here not one stone on another, all will be thrown down."
As he sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him privately, saying, "Tell us, when will these things be? And what will be the sign of your coming, and of the end of the age?"
JESUS answered them, "Be careful that no one leads you astray. For many will come in my name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and will lead many astray. You may hear of wars and rumors of wars, you may see signs in signs in the land and sky. For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and there will be famines and plagues and earthquakes in various places. See that you are not troubled, for this must happen, but these are not necessarily signs of the end. And see that you are not led astray by those who say, 'This is a sign of the end!' Before you see a real sign of the end, you are far more likely to see a sign of *your* end. For they will deliver you up to oppression, and you will be called to court to make account for your actions. Or you will be hated by all of the nations for my name's sake. You may even be killed! So if anyone tells you, 'Here is the Christ,' do not believe it, for you have seen the Christ. I say again, there will arise false messiahs, and false prophets, and they will show great signs and wonders, so as to lead astray many. If therefore they tell you, 'He is in the wilderness,' do not go out. If they tell you 'He is in the inner chambers,' do not believe it. And do not believe, 'He is coming,' for he has come and is here. See, I have told you beforehand. For as the lightning flashes from the east, and is seen even to the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. And we often do not know when or where lightning comes to strike a place, but we know it is not a rare event. Remember, wherever the carcass is, there is where the vultures gather together. But I tell you now, the sun will be darkened and the moon will not give its light, and even the luminaries that are in Heaven will be shaken by the events that will come soon.[767] And Jerusalem will be trampled down by non-Jewish people when the temple falls. And there will be times of the non-Jewish people, for the Jewish will be long without a homeland and without a temple. And you will see such upheaval that you will think the age of Jeremiah was mild. Truly I tell you, this generation will certainly not pass away until all these things have happened."[768]
He continued, "Now from the fig tree learn this parable. When its branch has now become tender, and puts forth its leaves, you know that the summer is near. Even so you also, when you see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors.[769] Who then is the faithful and wise servant, who his

---

sinners. In some cases, the sin was Sabbath work because they were poor. And since they were poor, there was a sort of premium for having one's sins forgiven, since an animal most be purchased without blemish (which meant paying the temples) in order to sacrifice. Those too poor were perpetual sinners. This is why he talks about the widow's mite, not to hold her up as an example of "charity," but to show how she was robbed of everything she had yet took it with faith, while the Pharisees had money enough to forgive all their sins, yet were terrible hypocrites. JESUS is condemning this model of "righteousness," as he does again with overturning the tables in the temple square.

[767] This prediction coincides with the darkness that stretches over the land during the crucifixion. This could be read as an end times prophecy, but the fact that it pairs neatly with this darkness suggest this itself could be read as a sign of Heaven and Earth. Also, a tie should be made with another event of darkness, that preceding the death of the firstborn in Exodus. Lastly, notice that they talk about Jerusalem trampled by the non-Jews. This happened in 70 AD.

[768] Notice what is not said. JESUS does not predict a distant apocalypse or thousand year peace or any of that nonsense. He says events will happen before the generation is over.

[769] I heavily edited this passage, because it seemed to be editorialized to make it match with Daniel (which you will see that I

LORD has set over his household, to give them their food in due season? Blessed is that servant who his LORD finds doing so when he comes. Truly I tell you that he will set him over all that he has. But the LORD of that servant will come in a day when he does not expect it,[770] and he might instead appoint the servant's portion with the hypocrites." Every day JESUS was teaching in the temple, and every night he would go out and spend the night on the mountain that is called Olivet. And all the people came early in the morning to him in the temple to hear him.

CHAPTER 28

Now when JESUS was in Bethany, in the house of Simon the jarmaker, a woman came to him having an alabaster jar[771] of expensive ointment of pure nard. She broke the jar, and she poured it on his head as he sat at the table. But there were some who were indignant among themselves, and saying, "Why has this ointment been wasted? For this ointment might have been sold for more than three hundred denarii, and given to the poor." They grumbled against her. But JESUS said, "Leave her alone. Why do you trouble her? She has done a good work for me. For you always have the poor with you, and whenever you want to, you can do them good; but you will not always have me. She has done what she could. She has anointed my body[772] beforehand for the burying. Truly I tell you, wherever this Good News may be preached throughout the whole world, that which this woman has done will also be spoken of for a memorial of her."

Now it was two days before the feast of the Passover and the unleavened bread, and the chief priests and the scribes wondered how they might seize him by deception, and kill him. For they said, "Not during the feast, because there might be a riot of the people." But one of the twelve, who was called Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests, and said, "What are you willing to give me, that I should deliver him to you?" They were glad when they heard this, and promised to give him money. They weighed out for him thirty pieces of silver. He consented, and sought an opportunity to deliver him to them in the absence of the crowd. From that time he sought opportunity to betray him. And small crowds began to gather both in favor of JESUS, and those desiring his death.

And that night, JESUS wandered the city, for his heart was troubled. And he wore a cloak so as to not draw the crowd's attention. In the city, there was a wedding going on for a couple who had decided to be married. So JESUS danced and laughed for the last time in his life, but in the excitement, his face was revealed. "It is the Messiah!" one of the crowd said, and they stopped their celebration to turn their attention to him. But JESUS was sorry that he drew their attention away from the joyful event, and prepared to leave. The bride asked him, "Please, LORD, would you bless this marriage?" And so, JESUS said these words,

> *Blessed are you, LORD our GOD, Ruler of the Heaven and Earth,[773] who has created all things for his glory. Blessed are you, LORD our GOD, Ruler of the Heaven and Earth, Creator of mankind. Blessed are you, LORD our GOD, Ruler of the Heaven and Earth, who created mankind in their image, in the image of their likeness they fashioned their form and divided their sides, and prepared him and her from their own self as an everlasting edifice. Blessed are you LORD, Creator of mankind. May the barren one rejoice and be happy at the ingathering of her children to her midst in joy. Blessed are you LORD, who makes Zion glad with her children. Grant abundant joy to these loving friends, as you bestowed gladness upon your created being in the*

---

have removed, as it appears from a cursory read to have been added on later to support Jewish ideals of apocalypse). I have determined instead to quote only from Isaiah's prophecy. Why is this important? Because as written above, JESUS compares himself to a fig tree, which he later wilts because it bears no fruit. In other words (by the standards of the Jews), JESUS is like a fig tree caused to wither for being unfruitful, then coming back to life. He is like a carcass also, that draws the vultures to himself. And most importantly, his crucifixion is a great tribulation (where his disciples suffer on his behalf), and is preceded by a darkness that comes over the land. Matthew, Mark, and Luke all have this prediction coupled with the darkness later. The writer here says this prophecy is about his body, and has no such prediction or darkness in the crucifixion.

[770] We should be sober and make the most of our time on Earth, building connections with others and do good works.

[771] A translation I found mentioned that some passages are from Aramaic (which has no vowels). "Jarmaker" not "leper." This also correlates to the expensive "box" she has, which she breaks, almost like it is a jar. Btw, Pandora's "Box" was actually a jar. *Pyxis* is box, *pithos* is jar.

[772] Messiah means "anointed one" and the means of anointing is to apply oil to them. Nard is unthinkably expensive as oil, basically the essential oil equivalent of saffron. Only the best for JESUS. This short chapter is about JESUS being the Messiah.

[773] The Heaven and Earth are the universe. The original text was king of the universe. But this has round Earth baggage than I think ought to be ditched,

garden of Eden of old. Blessed are you LORD, who makes glad the groom and bride. Blessed are you, LORD our GOD, Ruler of the Heaven and Earth, who created joy and happiness, groom and bride, gladness, jubilation, cheer and delight, love, friendship, harmony and fellowship. LORD our GOD, let there speedily be heard in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem the sound of joy and the sound of happiness, the sound of a groom and the sound of a bride, the sound of exultation of grooms from under their chupah, and youths from their joyous banquets. Blessed are you LORD, who makes the groom joyful with the bride. Blessed are you, LORD our GOD, Ruler of the Heaven and Earth, who creates the fruit of the vine. [774]

Now the next day, JESUS entered the temple to honor GOD, but seeing the forlorn animals sold for sacrifices, the sinners who couldn't afford to have their sins forgiven, and the money changed to the temple currency, he became enraged.

Now, JESUS had a bridle that was an heirloom from his father. It was a relic kept in a box from the time of liberation from captivity during the days of Moses. It had passed down from the line of David, through wars, exiles, famines, and prosperity. It had rarely been used, though JESUS, seeing that his line would end with him, made use of it, first to ride into Jerusalem by the East Gate, and now he twisted the cords of it into a whip. And he used the whip to great effect.

Then JESUS upended the tables, and he drove out the money changers and sellers of sacrificial animals, saying, "This is the LORD's temple, but you have turned it into a den of thieves!" He would not allow anyone to carry a container through the temple. When the chief priests and the scribes saw the wonderful things that he said and did, and the children crying out in the temple and saying, "Hosanna to the son of David," they were indignant, and said to him, "Do you hear what these are saying?" JESUS said to them, "Yes. Did you never read, 'Out of the mouth of children and infants you have prepared praise?'" The elders of the people and the chief priests came to him as he was teaching, and said, "By what authority do you do these things? Who gave you this authority?" JESUS answered them, "I also will ask you one question, which if you tell me, I likewise will tell you by what authority I do these things. The baptism of John, where was it from? From Heaven or from people?" They reasoned with themselves, saying, "If we say, 'From Heaven,' he will ask us, 'Why then did you not believe him?' But if we say, 'From people,' we fear the crowd, for all hold John as a prophet." They answered JESUS, and said, "We can not tell you." He also said to them, "Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things." And after this, they sought in earnest to have him killed as a scapegoat for Rome.

CHAPTER 29

The day of unleavened bread came, on which the Passover lamb must be sacrificed.[775] He sent Peter and John, saying, "Go and prepare the Passover for us, that we may eat." They said to him, "Where do you want us to prepare?" He said to them, "when you have entered into the city, a man carrying a pitcher of water will meet you. Follow him into the house which he enters. Tell the master of the house, 'The Teacher says, the time is near. He will keep the Passover at your house with his disciples.' And he will show you a large, furnished upper room. Make preparations there." The disciples did as JESUS commanded them, and they prepared the Passover.

Now when evening had come, he was reclining at the table with the twelve. He said to them, "I have earnestly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer, for I say to you, I will not eat of it again until it is fulfilled in the Kingdom of GOD." He received a cup, and when he had given thanks, he said, "Take this, and share it among yourselves, for I tell you, from now on I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the Kingdom of GOD comes." He took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and gave to them, saying, "This is my body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me."[776] Likewise, he took the cup after they had eaten, saying, "This cup is the new testament in my blood,

---

[774] This episode is from *The Chosen*. I added it, because I felt like I could imagine JESUS doing it the night before. The blessing is the *Sheva Berachot*, a Jewish marriage blessing.

[775] I compared between the lamb of Passover and the lamb of the Day of Atonement, and the Lamb for all sins, JESUS. Other lambs have to be killed yearly, whereas JESUS offers himself once for all time.

[776] The Passover meal has unleavened bread and wine, and the current Christian communion is a sort of reproduction of this particular scene. JESUS wants to impress upon them the importance of this event.

which is poured out for you for the forgiveness of sins."[777]
As they were eating the lamb, he said, "Truly I tell you that one of you will betray me." And they were greatly distressed, and each one began to ask him, "It is not me, is it, LORD?" He answered, "He who dipped his hand with me in the dish, the same will betray me. The Son of Man goes, even as it is written of him, but woe to that man through who the Son of Man is betrayed. It would be better for that man if he had not been born." Judas, who betrayed him, answered, "It is not me, is it, Rabbi?" He said to him, "You said it."
And he began to strip off his outer garments, and knelt at the feet of his disciples, and began to wash their feet. And seeing their shocked faces, he explained his purpose. [778] He said to them, "The kings of the nations LORD it over them, and those who have authority over them are called 'benefactors.' But not so with you. But one who is the greater among you, let him become as the younger, and one who is governing, as one who serves. For who is greater, one who sits at the table, or one who serves? Is it not he who sits at the table? But I AM in the midst of you as one who serves. But you are those who have continued with me in my trials. I confer on you a kingdom, even as my Father conferred on me, that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and you will sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel."
And then they went out to the Mount of Olives, singing hymns[779] on the way. JESUS said to them, "All of you will fall away, for it is written, 'I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered.' However, after I have been raised up, I will go before you into Galilee." But Peter answered him, "Even if all others will leave you, I will never forsake you." And JESUS said, "Simon, Simon, Satan asked to have you, that he might sift you as wheat, but I prayed for you, that your faith would not fail. You, when once you have turned again, establish your brothers." He said to him, "LORD, I am ready to go with you both to prison and to death." JESUS said to him, "Truly I tell you that tonight, before the rooster crows, you will deny me three times." Peter said to him, "Even if I must die with you, I will not deny you." All of the disciples also said likewise. He said to them, "When I sent you out without money bag, and pack, and shoes, did you lack anything?" They said, "Nothing." Then he said to them, "But now, whoever has a money bag must take it, and likewise a pack. Whoever has none, must sell his cloak, and buy a sword. For I tell you that this which is written must still be fulfilled in me: 'And he was numbered with transgressors.' For that which concerns me has an end." They said, "LORD, here are two swords." He said to them, "That is enough."
They came to a place which was named Gethsemane. He said to his disciples, "Sit here, while I pray. Pray that you do not enter into temptation." He took with him Peter, James, and John, and began to be greatly troubled and distressed. He said to them, "I am exceedingly sorrowful, even to death. Stay here, and watch." He went forward a little, and fell on the ground, and prayed. And an angel from Heaven appeared to him, strengthening him. And GOD himself was not silent in his prayer, but showed him visions. He saw Adam and Eve, the fall of mankind, and the flood. Then GOD showed how the line of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were established. And GOD showed JESUS how Abraham had nearly sacrificed his own son. Then JESUS prayed, "Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me. Nevertheless, not my will, but yours, be done." Being in agony he prayed more earnestly. His sweat became like great drops of blood falling down on the ground. He came and found them sleeping, and said to Peter, "Simon, are you sleeping? Could you not watch one hour? Watch and pray, that you may not enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." Again, a second time he went away, and prayed, saying, "My Father, if this cannot pass away unless I drink it, your desire be done." And GOD himself was not silent in his prayer, but showed him visions. He saw Jeremiah, he saw the valley of dry bones and himself talking to Ezekiel, asking, "Son of Man, can these bones live?" And he saw the immediate future of the Jewish people, and how they were very nearly destroyed over a senseless war. And he saw them rising from the ashes, and wandering centuries. When he rose up from his prayer, he came to the disciples, and found them sleeping because of grief, and said to them, "Why do you sleep? Rise and pray that you may not enter into

---

[777] Judas took the cup also, for the forgiveness of sins. Contrary to many who think he is damned, he is there to receive this communion.
[778] This is not in the original text, but it helps solidify foot-washing tradition, and clarify JESUS's next words.
[779] Likely the Hallel Psalms (113-118).

temptation." And Judas had left during the night, and nobody knew where he was.
Again he went away, and prayed, saying the same words. And this time, he saw a future. He saw his teachings live on in a grand nation, who declared that it would be a city upon a hill, a light to inspire other nations. And he saw potential for great harm, as its worst critics proven their hypocrisy, shaming the country who had abolished slavery for having it in the first place, while they secretly supported human trafficking. He saw the destructive desires to urbanize at the cost of farming communities, of too many roads and data centers and shopping malls and solar panels, not enough farms and gardens and berry bushes. And he saw wars and social conflict, and he saw deceptive government charging high taxes. But he saw potential for greatness, potential that would never come to pass if there never was such a thing as a follower of Christ. And he saw individual Christians giving their lives and taking down oppressive governments, not with force but with humanity and kindness. It was here that he stopped praying not to have to do what was coming for him. For he too accepted GOD's vision. He came the third time, and found them sleeping, for their eyes were very heavy, and they did not know what to answer him. And he said to them, "It is enough. The hour has come. The Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Arise, let us be going. He who betrays me is near."
While he was still speaking, Judas came with a mob of chief priests and elders, who had also brought guards to arrest JESUS. At once, they roused from their sleepiness. Now he who betrayed him gave them a sign, saying, "Whoever I kiss, he is the one. Seize him." Immediately he came to JESUS, and said, "Greetings, Rabbi." and kissed him. But JESUS said to him, "Judas my friend,[780] do you betray the Son of Man with a kiss?" They laid hands on him, and seized him.
When those who were around him saw what was about to happen, they said to him, "JESUS, should we strike with the sword?" And they drew a sword, and Peter struck one of their ears. But JESUS answered and said, "No more of this! Put your sword back into its place, for all those who take the sword will die by the sword." And before guards could also seize Peter, JESUS healed the man's ear.[781]
JESUS said to the chief priests, captains of the temple, and elders, who had come against him, "Have you come out as against a robber, with swords and clubs? When I was with you in the temple daily, you did not stretch out your hands against me. But this is your hour, and darkness's power." The disciples all fled from him.
And a certain young man followed him, having a linen cloth thrown around himself, over his naked body. And they grabbed him, but he left the linen cloth, and fled naked.[782]
Those who had taken JESUS led him away to Caiaphas the high priest, where the scribes and the elders were gathered together. But Peter followed him from a distance, to the court of the high priest, and entered in and sat with the officers, to see the end. When they had kindled a fire in the middle of the courtyard, and had sat down together, Peter sat among them. A certain servant girl saw him as he sat in the light, and looking intently at him, said, "This man also was with him." But he denied it, saying, "Woman, I do not know him." After a little while someone else saw him, and said, "You also are one of them." But Peter answered, "Man, I am not." After about one hour passed, another confidently affirmed, saying, "Truly this man also was with him, for he is a Galilean." But Peter said with an oath, "Damn you! I do not know..." but a rooster crowed while he was still speaking, "...what you are talking about." Then Peter remembered the JESUS's words, how he said to him, "Before the rooster crows today you will deny me three times." And he went out, and wept bitterly.
Now the chief priests and the whole council sought false testimony against JESUS so they could put him to death. But they found none, even though many witnesses came forward. But JESUS held his peace. Even so, their testimony did not agree. The high priest stood up in the midst, and asked JESUS, "Have you no answer? What is it which these testify against you?" But he stayed quiet, and answered nothing. The high priest answered him, "I adjure you by the living GOD, that you tell us whether you are the Christ, the Son of GOD." And JESUS said, "I AM, and you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of Power, and coming with the clouds of the Heavens."

---

[780] Notice the difference between Judas's "Rabbi" address and JESUS's "friend." Judas doesn't know JESUS well, and betrays him. This is the tragedy of Judas, he makes assumptions of JESUS, so it's like the Citizen Kane thing with Rosebud.
[781] JESUS told them to buy a sword, then set up a condition where one of his disciples had a crime, that of fighting the authorities, and the crime was effectively erased.
[782] This is likely John Mark, who wrote the original Book of Mark.

The high priest tore his clothes,[783] and said, "What further need have we of witnesses? You have heard the blasphemy. What do you think?" They all condemned him to be worthy of death. And he threw his clothes at JESUS's feet as testimony against him.
Then they spit in his face. The guards mocked and began to hit him while blindfolded, saying, "Prophesy to us. Who hit you?" and "Prophesy! Who'll hit you next?" They spoke many other things against him, insulting him.

CHAPTER 30

Now when morning had come, all the chief priests and the elders of the people took counsel against JESUS to put him to death. And they bound him and led him away, then delivered him to the governor Pilate. They began to accuse him, saying, "We found this man subverting our nation, forbidding paying taxes to Caesar, and saying that he himself is the Christ, a king." Pilate asked him, "Are you the King of the Jews?" He answered him, "You say so." And the elders accused him of many things. Pilate again asked him, "Have you no answer? See how many things they testify against you." But JESUS made no further answer, and Pilate was amazed. Pilate said to the chief priests and the crowds, "I find no basis for a charge against this man." But they insisted, saying, "He stirs up the people, teaching throughout all Judea, beginning from Galilee even to this place." But when Pilate heard it, he asked if the man was a Galilean. When he found out that he was in Herod's jurisdiction, he sent him to Herod, who was also in Jerusalem during those days.
Meanwhile, the chief priests had gone outside, frustrated with the trial. And there, they met Judas, who betrayed him. When he saw that JESUS was condemned, felt remorse, and returned the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, saying, "I have sinned in that I betrayed innocent blood." But they said, "What is that to us? You see to it." He threw down the pieces of silver in the sanctuary, and departed. He went away and hanged himself. The chief priests took the pieces of silver, and said, "It's not lawful to put them into the treasury, since it is the price of blood." They took counsel, and bought the potter's field with them, to bury strangers in. Therefore that field was called "The Field of Blood" to this day.[784] Then that which was spoken through Jeremiah the prophet was fulfilled, saying, "They took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of him upon who a price had been set, who some of the children of Israel priced, and they gave them for the potter's field, as GOD commanded me."
Now when Herod saw JESUS, he was exceedingly glad, for he had wanted to see him for a long time, because he had heard about him. He hoped to see some miracle done by him. He questioned him with many words, but he gave no answers. The chief priests and the scribes stood, vehemently accusing him. Herod with his soldiers treated him with contempt and mocked him. Dressing him in luxurious clothing, they sent him back to Pilate. Herod and Pilate became friends with each other that very day, for before that they were enemies with each other.
Pilate called together the chief priests and the rulers and the people, and said to them, "You brought this man to me as one that subverts the people, and see, I have examined him before you, and found no basis for a charge against this man concerning those things of which you accuse him. Neither has Herod, for he sent him back to us, and see, I find no fault with him.[785] I will therefore chastise him and release him."
Now at the feast he used to release to them one prisoner, who they requested. There was one called

---

[783] This is *very* interesting. According to Leviticus, the law about tearing your clothes was that it is done as an act of mourning, that is, when a loved is dead or you are otherwise in a state of grief or pain, you are allowed to tear your clothes, but the high priest under no circumstances is allowed to do so. The priest is supposed to be separated from common customs, as they are supposed to be set apart as the one chosen by the LORD. Yet by tearing his clothes (effectively calling JESUS a dead man), he is proving that he in fact is not chosen by GOD but is rather no more than an official with an empty rank, not a holy man at all. More importantly, by tearing his clothes, he has abolished the priestly system, and has laid the office at JESUS's feet.
[784] Field of Blood, or Akeldama was the site of burial ground for non-Jews until the 19th century. I do not believe Judas was a wholly evil person. I believe he was a very ambitious person who was driven by a need to make a difference in the world. He probably thought that if he forced JESUS's hand, he would be the sort of revolutionary type that he was "supposed to be", and would put an end to Rome. JESUS did in fact grant his deepest desire. He became a person who fundamentally changed the world we live in, and out of his sin and failure two things were born. The first was the resurrection of JESUS, and the Kingdom of GOD, and the second was this field which helped those (like him) who had no place to take them. Out of sin, GOD works good.
[785] When a lamb is taken to be slaughtered, they must be declared by the officials free of blemish. Neither the state of Rome nor the state of the Jewish people have a case against him (though the priests and the Pharisees object to him).

Barabbas[786], bound with those who had made insurrection, who in the insurrection had committed murder. And the crowd went up and began to ask him to do for them according to his custom. Pilate answered them, saying, "Do you want me to release to you the King of the Jews?" For he perceived that for envy the chief priests had delivered him up. While he was sitting on the judgement seat, his wife sent word to him, saying, "Have nothing to do with that righteous man, for I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of him." But the chief priests and the elders persuaded the crowds to ask for Barabbas, and destroy JESUS. Pilate again asked them, "What then should I do to him who you call the King of the Jews?" They all said, "Let him be crucified." But he said, "Why? What evil has he done?" They shouted again, "Crucify him!" Pilate objected again. But they shouted all the louder, "Crucify him!!!" So Pilate, seeing that nothing was being gained, but rather that a disturbance was starting, took water and he washed his hands before the crowd, saying, "I am innocent of the blood of this righteous man. You see to it."

Pilate, wishing to please the crowd, released Barabbas to them, and handed over JESUS, when he had flogged him, to be crucified. The soldiers led him away within the court, which is the Praetorium; and they called together the whole cohort. They clothed him with purple, but the blood from his wounds made it appear almost scarlet.[787] They began to salute him, "Greetings, King of the Jews." They braided a crown of thorns and put it on his head, and a reed in his right hand; and they kneeled down before him. Then they spat on him, and took the reed and struck him on the head. When they had mocked him, they took the purple off of him, and put his own garments on him. They led him out to crucify him.

And they forced one passing by, Simon of Cyrene, coming from the country, the father of Alexander and Rufus, to go with them, for he was very faint from his wounds. A large crowd of the people followed him, including women who also mourned and lamented him. But JESUS, turning to them, said, "Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children. For the days are coming in which they will say, 'Blessed are the barren, the wombs that never bore, and the breasts that never nursed.' Then they will begin to say to the mountains, 'Fall on us,' and to the hills, 'Cover us.' For if they do these things in the green tree, what will be done in the dry?" They came to a place called "*Golgotha*," that is to say, "The place of a skull."

They crucified him on a green tree[788] there with the criminals, one on the right and the other on the left, the nail driven at an angle so that it bruised against the outside of his hand, and pierced between the bones in the heel of his hand where the fingers joined together.[789] This was to fulfill the prophecy. And the scripture was fulfilled which says, "And he was numbered with transgressors." They offered him wine mixed with myrrh to drink, but he did not take it.

Those who passed by blasphemed him, wagging their heads, and saying, "Ha. You who destroy the temple, and build it in three days, save yourself and come down from there." Likewise, also the chief priests mocking among themselves with the scribes said, "He saved others, he cannot save himself. Let the Christ, the King of Israel, now come down from there, that we may see and believe him." And JESUS said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing." Dividing his garments among them, they cast lots. When they had crucified him, they divided his clothing among themselves, casting a lot, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet: 'They divided my clothes among themselves, and for my clothing they cast a lot.' And they sat and watched him there. They set up over his head the accusation against him written in Latin, Greek, and Hebrew, «This is JESUS, King of the Jews.» And the Pharisees wanted it changed, for it was a source of derision, but Pilate refused to alter it.[790]

---

[786] *Bar abbas* is "Son of the father." The writers of the gospel are making a contrast between the false Messianic prophecies, and the truth of JESUS as Son of GOD. Barabbas is a thug, JESUS is willing to die for our sins.

[787] The color is not agreed upon. Some texts say it is scarlet and some say it's purple. So my solution was...

[788] Drawing a parallel with what Peter says about "cursed is the one who hangs from a tree." I mentioned it was green to tie into what JESUS said just before, meaning he was effectively prophesying about the very tree that crucified him. Also, we need to abolish the veneration of the cross. It is *not* the cross that saves us, but JESUS dying for our sins.

[789] The heel of the hand, and not the wrist in this account. This area is less likely, as it requires a precise hit to avoid breaking bones, but the point is the palm would not support the body's weight, while the heel or the wrist would be able to.

[790] The implication is that JESUS had been stripped naked. Remember that earlier the footnotes proposed a theory that JESUS was actually born a woman? We're assuming not only that, but that the public deluded themselves into calling him a man. And

One of the criminals who hung there also insulted him, saying, "Are you not the Christ? Save yourself and us." But the other answered, and rebuking him said, "Do you not even fear GOD, seeing you are under the same condemnation? And we indeed justly punished, for we receive the due reward for our deeds; but this man has done nothing wrong." And he said, "JESUS, remember me when you come into your Kingdom." And he said to him, "Assuredly I tell you, today you will be with me in Paradise." Now from noon until three in the afternoon the whole Earth was darkened for a long period as though night.[791] And this event is recorded in the histories of other lands.[792] Then at about three in the afternoon JESUS called out with a loud voice, saying, "*Eli, Eli, lema shabachthani*?" That is, "My GOD, my GOD, why have you forsaken me?"[793]

Some of them who stood there, when they heard it, said, "This man is calling Elijah." Immediately one of them ran, and took a sponge, and filled it with vinegar, and put it on a reed, and gave him a drink. The rest said, "Let him be. Let us see whether Elijah comes to save him." And JESUS cried out again with a loud voice, "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit!" Having said this, he breathed his last. Then the veil of the temple was torn in two from the top to the bottom. [794]

The ground quaked and the rocks were split. The tombs were opened, and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised; and coming out of the tombs after his resurrection, they entered into the holy city and appeared to many. Now the centurion, and those who were with him watching JESUS, when they saw an earthquake, and the things that were done, feared exceedingly, saying, "Truly this was the Son of GOD."[795]

CHAPTER 31

There were also women watching from afar, among who were both Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of JESUS (the latter who came there along with James the younger), and Salome who followed and served him when he was in Galilee. And there were many other women who came up with him to Jerusalem. And they mourned his death in private and kept vigil. And a fox that was nearby came to howl outside the spot that he was buried, for it was a full moon bright as day and crimson as blood. This fox was a grandchild of the very same fox that had seen JESUS in a manger years ago.[796] Seeing Mary, the animal sat with her while howling mournfully.

When evening had now come, because it was the Preparation Day, that is, the day before the Sabbath, Joseph of Arimathea, a prominent council member who also himself was looking for the Kingdom of GOD, came. He boldly went in to Pilate, and asked for the body of JESUS. Pilate was surprised that he was already dead; and summoning the centurion, he asked him whether he had been dead long. When he found out from the centurion, he granted the body to Joseph. He bought a linen cloth, and taking him down, wound him in the linen cloth, and placed him in a tomb which had been cut out of a rock. He rolled a stone against the door of the tomb. They returned, and prepared spices and ointments. On the Sabbath they rested according to the commandment.

---

this myth carried on because of chauvinism. But it was hard to deny with JESUS stripped naked for all to see.

[791] This is a solar eclipse. The Bible calls it a "darkness" though, not because the Jews were ignorant people, but because during the Passover, a lunar eclipse, not a solar eclipse, would have been possible. Also, eclipses are usually only eight to ten minutes, not three hours, and not the whole Earth. JESUS predicts earlier all sorts of cosmic events at the fall of the temple, could already be declared fulfilled. This is a day without darkness or light, and possibly was the Day of the LORD. I added a later reference to an abnormal lunar eclipse.

[792] Chinese history has the *Book of the Later Han* which reads: 夏月四月仁武日，一道詔令頒布：「陰陽失衡，日月蝕，百姓犯下種種罪行，罪責全在我一人。現頒布大赦令。各公爵、大臣、縣令、巡撫，須推荐一位德行端正之人，送至禦車，由我審問考驗。」 or in English, "On the Renwu Day of the fourth month of summer, an imperial edict was issued: 'The balance of Yin and Yang has been disrupted, and the sun and moon have been eclipsed. The people have committed various crimes, and the responsibility lies entirely with me. I hereby issue a general amnesty. Each magistrate must recommend a person of upright character to be sent to the imperial carriage for me to interrogate and examine.'" Some versions say, "The sins of all the people are now on one man. Pardon is proclaimed to all under heaven." But that's only secondarily relevant to the announcement that one the same day, there were two eclipses. The Later Han period overlapped the period of 31 AD to 34 AD.

[793] This is a reference to a Psalm which nearly exactly mirrors the events of JESUS's death.

[794] The veil separated regular humans and anyone but the high priest from the presence of GOD. With the veil destroyed, humans are now not separated from GOD. This is why the Second Coming is not necessary. We already have grace for our sins, as Christ died to make us part of the Body of Christ.

[795] This is the resurrection, not only of JESUS, but also of the dead.

[796] Passover is always on the night of the full moon, as explained above. As for the fox, I wanted it to be the same fox, but foxes only live fourteen years.

Now on the next day, which was the day after the Preparation Day, the chief priests and the Pharisees were gathered together to Pilate, saying, "Sir, we he said while he was still alive: 'After three days I will rise again.' Command therefore that the tomb be made secure until the third day, lest perhaps his disciples come and steal him away, and tell the people, 'He is risen from the dead;' and the last deception will be worse than the first." Pilate said to them, "You have a guard. Go, make it as secure as you can." So they went with the guard and made the tomb secure, sealing the stone.
Now after the Sabbath, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to see the tomb. During the early morning, there was a great earthquake, for JESUS descended from the sky, and came and rolled away the stone. His appearance was like lightning, and his clothing white as snow. The fear of him was so palpable that the guards fainted and foamed at the mouth.[797] And when the women got there, they saw no sign of JESUS, but there was an angel outside when they exited the tomb. The angel answered the women, "Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek JESUS, who has been crucified. He is not here, for he has conquered death and is risen." And the women departed in great fear and trembling, wondering what sort of sign this was.[798]

CHAPTER 32

They departed quickly from the tomb, and ran to bring his disciples word of what they had seen. And they wandered around as though in a fog, unable to process it. Then JESUS met them in Galilee, telling them, "Rejoice!" And they came and took hold of his feet, and worshiped him, for their fear had turned to joy.
Now while they were going, some of the guards came into the city, and told the chief priests all the things that had happened. When they were assembled with the elders, and had taken counsel, they gave a large amount of silver to the soldiers, saying, "Say that his disciples came by night, and stole him away while we slept. If this comes to the governor's ears, we will persuade him and make you free of worry." So they took the money and did as they were told. This saying was spread abroad among the Jewish people, and continues until this day.[799]
Now Mary Magdalene and Joanna and Mary the mother of James and the other women with them who told these things to the twelve. These words seemed to them to be nonsense, and they did not believe them. But Peter got up and ran to the tomb. Stooping and looking in, he saw the strips of linen by themselves, and he departed to his home, wondering what had happened.
Two of them were going that very day to a village named Emmaus, which was about seven miles from Jerusalem. They talked with each other about all of these things which had happened. It happened, while they talked and questioned together, that JESUS came near in the form of a woman,[800] and went with them. But their eyes were kept from recognizing her. And she said to them, "What are these words that you are exchanging with each other as you walk?" And they stood still, looking sad.
One of them, named Cleopas, answered her, "Are you the only stranger in Jerusalem who does not know the things which have happened there in these days?" She said to them, "What things?" They said to her, "The things concerning JESUS, the Nazarene, a man who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before GOD and all the people; and how the chief priests and our rulers delivered him up to be condemned to death, and crucified him. But we were hoping that it was he who would redeem Israel. Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things happened. Also, certain women of our company amazed us, having arrived early at the tomb; and when they did not find his body, they came saying that they had also seen a vision of angels, who said that he was alive. And later, they met

---

[797] Yes, like Conqueror's Haki from *One Piece*. What?
[798] The Ethiopian version of the Bible was cut off from the rest of the Catholic and Orthodox copies for centuries, and was found with two major changes. First, it had the Book of Enoch, which I have combined into my story of the Creation and the Fall. The second difference is that Mark ends with a sort of cliffhanger like this. I think uncertainty says something important.
[799] From the start, both Jews and Romans have worked together to conceal the resurrection, since the idea that humans don't need to fear death is a threat not only to state control, but any judgement that priests might declare. Some atheists think that this was added in because JESUS turned out not to be the Messiah, but this is absurd. Romans wouldn't want an idea that threatens state control. And Jews wouldn't want an idea that subverts the traditions.
[800] This is a feminist telling of the Gospel. Since comparing Matthew, Mark, and Luke yielded three different versions of events, I decided to tell this as I have experienced JESUS. That is to say, JESUS often feels to be in disguise much like this, and one of these is as a woman. So yeah, not only are the women the ones who see JESUS, not Simon, but JESUS is a woman here. Deal with it.

him on the road to Galilee. Some of us went to the tomb, and found it empty like the women had said, but they did not see him."
Then she said to them, "Oh foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken. Did not the Christ have to suffer these things and to enter into his glory?" Beginning from Moses and from all the prophets, she explained to them in all the scriptures the things concerning JESUS. They drew near to the village, where they were going, and she acted like she would go further. They urged her, saying, "Stay with us, for it is almost evening, and the day is almost over." She went in to stay with them. When she had sat down at the table with them, she took the bread and gave thanks. Breaking it, she gave to them. Their eyes were opened, and they recognized JESUS, but then JESUS vanished out of their sight. And they said to one another, "Weren't our hearts burning within us, while she spoke to us along the way, and while the scriptures opened to us?"
They rose up that very hour, returned to Jerusalem, and found the eleven gathered together, and those who were with them, saying, "JESUS is risen indeed, and has appeared to Mary."[801]
They related the things that happened along the way, and how JESUS was recognized by them in the breaking of the bread. As they said these things, JESUS himself stood among them, and said to them, "Peace be to you." But they were terrified and filled with fear, and supposed that they had seen a spirit. He said to them, "Why are you troubled? Why do doubts arise in your hearts? See my hands and my feet, that it is truly me. Touch me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones, as you see that I have." When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his feet. While they still did not believe for joy, and wondered, he said to them, "Do you have anything here to eat?" And they gave him a piece of a broiled fish. And he took it and ate in front of them.
And he said to them, "This is what I told you, while I was still with you, that all things which are written in the law of Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms, concerning me must be fulfilled." Then he opened their minds, that they might understand the scriptures. He said to them, "Thus it is written, for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day, and that repentance leading to forgiveness of sins should be preached in his name to all the nations, beginning at Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things. And I send forth the promise of my Father on you. But wait in the city until you are clothed with power from on high."
He led them out as far as Bethany, and he lifted up his hands, and blessed them. [802] They worshiped him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy, and were continually in the temple, praising and blessing GOD.

GOSPEL OF THE BELOVED

CHAPTER 1

In the beginning was Wisdom[803], and Wisdom was the Word of GOD[804], and Wisdom was with GOD, and she was GOD. She was in the beginning with GOD.[805] All things were made through her, and apart from her nothing was made that has been made. In her was life, and the life was the light of humanity. And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness could not overcome it.
The true Light that enlightens everyone was coming into the world. This Light was in the world, and the world was made through the Light, but the world did not recognize the Light, and was not understood by those people who should be chosen. But to those who understood, they were called GOD's children, to those who believe in his name, who were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of GOD. And Wisdom became flesh and she lived among us as a man, and we saw his glory, such glory as of the one and only of the Father, full of grace and truth.
There came a man, sent from GOD, whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify about the

---

[801] I apologize for nothing. This is totally my doing.
[802] After this, it talks about how he was parted from them and carried up to Heaven. While I do believe JESUS is in Heaven, he is not parted from us. The resurrection means that JESUS is always with us. This is important, because I believe the Second Coming was a false teaching that arose after the fall of the temple, while the Bible was still being written. It's a way of denying Christ, by claiming he has gone away. The reason this teaching was done was that many Christians were Jews, and looking for revenge for the temple and/or JESUS. But JESUS tells us that his kingdom is not of this world.
[803] I changed the Word (logos) for Wisdom to draw parallels between Lady Wisdom. Lady Wisdom is JESUS Christ.
[804] I also wanted readers to know that JESUS is the Word of GOD, so I included both texts.
[805] This is what "begotten not made" means in the Nicene Creed. JESUS existed before he was born to Mary.

light, that all might believe through him. He was not the light, but was sent that he might testify about the Light. And this is John's testimony, when the Jewish leaders sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, "Who are you?" And he confessed, and did not deny, but he confessed, "I am not the Christ." And they asked him, "What then? Are you Elijah?" And he said, "I am not." "Are you the Prophet?" And he answered, "No." They said therefore to him, "Who are you? Give us an answer to take back to those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?" He said, "I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, 'Make straight the way of GOD,' as Isaiah the prophet said."
(Now they had been sent from the Pharisees.)
And they asked him, "Why then do you baptize, if you are not the Christ, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet?" John answered them, saying, "I baptize in water, but one is coming after me, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to loosen." These things were done in Bethany across the Jordan, where John was baptizing. The next day, he saw JESUS coming to him, and said, "The Lamb of GOD, who takes away the sin of the world. This is the one of who I said, 'After me comes a man who ranks ahead of me, because he existed before me.' I did not know him, but for this reason I came baptizing in water: that he would be revealed to Israel."
And John testified, saying, "I saw the Spirit descending like a dove out of Heaven, and it remained on him. And I did not recognize him, but he who sent me to baptize in water, he said to me, 'On whoever you will see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, this is who baptizes in the *Ruach ha Kodesh*.' And I have seen and have testified that this is the Chosen One of GOD."
John was standing with two of his disciples, and when he looked at JESUS and said, "Behold the Lamb of GOD," the two disciples heard him say this, and they followed JESUS. And JESUS turned and saw them following, and said to them, "What are you looking for?" They said to him, "Rabbi, where are you staying?" He said to them, "Come, and you will see." They came and saw where he was staying, and they stayed with him that day. It was about four in the afternoon.
As he was leaving where John the Baptist had been teaching, a man named Thaddeus also noticed John pointing him out. Now Thaddeus was a farmer that had come to Jerusalem for a festival, but wound up staying to be baptized by John.[806] And JESUS called him to follow.
Now, one of the two who heard John, and followed JESUS, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. So he first found his own brother, Simon, and said to him, "We have found the Messiah." He brought him to JESUS. JESUS looked at him, and said, "You are Simon the son of Jonah. You will be called Peter."[807]
On the next day, he was determined to go out into Galilee, and he found Philip. And JESUS said to him, "Follow me." Now Philip was from Bethsaida, of the city of Andrew and Peter, and he was the other follower of John the Baptist. Philip found Nathanael, and said to him, "We have found him of who Moses in the law and the prophets wrote: JESUS of Nazareth, the son of Joseph." Now Nathanael had been alone under a fig tree, and he had cried out to GOD in anguish and despair just before Philip met him, for his life had gone deeply wrong. Nathanael had been an architect working on a tower near Siloam, when the structure collapsed and killed eighteen people, and his career was ruined, so he was pessimistic when Phillip mentioned the Savior. Nathanael said to him, "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" Philip said to him, "Come and see." JESUS saw Nathanael coming to him, and said about him, "Here is a true Israelite in who there is no deceit." Nathanael said to him, "How do you know me?" JESUS answered him,"Before Philip met you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you." Nathanael answered him, "Rabbi, you are the Son of GOD." JESUS answered him, "Because I told you, 'I saw you underneath the fig tree,' do you believe? You will see greater things than these." And he said to him, "Truly, truly, I tell you, you will see Heaven opened, and the angels of GOD ascending and descending on the Son of Man."

CHAPTER 2

And the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of JESUS was there. Now JESUS also was invited, with his disciples to the wedding. And a man named Thomas had brought the wine for the event, traveling with a woman named Ramah.[808] And when the wine ran out, JESUS'

[806] Thaddeus's story is confusing, as there are many similar named ones. I went with Thaddeus of Edessa.
[807] Peter means "stone". Which sometimes comes up in the Letters, as Peter is the stone on which JESUS builds his church.
[808] Like *The Chosen*, I decided to include a love interest for Thomas. Unlike *The Chosen*, I find it extremely contrived that she should die, as it makes JESUS lack compassion.

mother said to him, "They have no wine." JESUS said to her, "Woman, what does that have to do with you and me? My hour has not yet come." His mother said to the servants, "Whatever he says to you, do it." Now there were six stone water jars set there after the Jewish manner of purifying, containing two or three metretes[809] apiece. JESUS said to them, "Fill the water jars with water." They filled them up to the brim. He said to them, "Now draw some out, and take it to the ruler of the feast." So they took it. When the ruler of the feast tasted the water now become wine, and did not know where it came from (but the servants who had drawn the water knew). So the ruler of the feast called the bridegroom, and said to him, "Everyone serves the good wine first, and when the guests have drunk freely, they serve the wine which is worse. But you have kept the good wine until now." This beginning of his signs JESUS did in Cana of Galilee, and revealed his glory; and his disciples believed in him. After this, Thomas left his business and followed JESUS. And Ramah wished to leave with him and follow JESUS, but her father strictly forbade her. And her heart longed for Thomas, but they were separated.

After this, he went down to Capernaum, he, and his mother and brothers, and his disciples; and they stayed there a few days. The Jewish Passover was near, so JESUS went up to Jerusalem. And he found in the temple those who sold oxen, sheep, and doves, and the money changers sitting. And he made a whip of cords, and threw all out of the temple. He said, "Take these things out of here! Do not make my Father's house a marketplace!" His disciples remembered that it was written, "Zeal for your house will consume me."

But the Jewish leaders therefore answered him, "What sign do you show us, seeing that you do these things?" JESUS answered them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." The Jewish leaders therefore said, "It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and will you raise it up in three days?" But he spoke of the temple of his body.[810] When therefore he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he said this.

CHAPTER 3

Now there was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a leader of the Jewish people. This man came to him at night, and said to him, "Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher come from GOD, for no one can do these signs that you do, unless GOD is with him." For he had seen what had happened to Mary Magdalene (after trying to exorcise her himself), and many other healing signs.[811] JESUS answered him, "Truly, truly, I tell you, unless one is born again he cannot see the Kingdom of GOD." Nicodemus said to him, "How can anyone be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb?" JESUS answered, "Truly, truly, I tell you, unless one is born of water and Spirit he cannot enter into the Kingdom of GOD. That which is born of the flesh is flesh. That which is born of the Spirit is spirit. The wind blows where it wants to, and you hear its sound, but do not know where it comes and where it goes. Thus also are those born of the Spirit."

Nicodemus answered and said to him, "How can these things be?" JESUS answered him, "Are you the teacher of Israel, and do not understand these things? Truly, truly, I tell you, we speak that which we know, and testify of that which we have seen, but you do not accept our testimony. If I told you earthly things and you do not believe, how will you believe if I tell you things of Heaven? And no one has ascended into Heaven, but he who descended out of Heaven, the Son of Man. Just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up. For GOD so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish, but have everlasting life.[812] For GOD did not send his Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world should be saved through him."[813]

---

[809] A unit of liquid measurement, each roughly nine gallons.

[810] The prophecy of the destruction of the temple occurs in all four gospels. But unlike the others, they do not relate it to some apocalypse, they state, like I have mentioned in Matthew, that this destruction is not referring to far away "end times" but to JESUS's death itself.

[811] This part is an addition that is a ripple effect of the previous additions.

[812] This is widely held up as the best verse of the Bible. But actually, it's the next verse.

[813] This is the most important verse of the Bible, as it puts the lie to the notion of the Second Coming. In Revelation, "JESUS" comes to judge the world, and there is a lot of intrigue around a fake JESUS leading others astray. But JESUS forgave those who did about the worst crime imaginable, putting him to death on the cross. If JESUS was sent to save and not condemn, then this account of an end times judgement is a false teaching.

He continued, "And whoever believes in the Son will not be condemned, but whoever rejects the Son has *already*[814] condemned themselves, and will not be condemned by the Father. For this is the judgement, that the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light, because their works were evil. For everyone who does evil hates the light, and does not come to the light, so that his works will not be exposed. But the one who does the truth comes to the light, that his works may be revealed, that they have been done in GOD."[815]
After these things, JESUS came with his disciples into the land of Judea. He stayed there with them, and baptized. Now John also was baptizing in Aenon near Salim, because there was much water there. They came, and were baptized. For John was not yet thrown into prison. Now a dispute arose between John's disciples with a Jew about purification. And they came to John, and said to him, "Rabbi, he who was with you beyond the Jordan, to who you have testified, he is baptizing, and everyone is coming to him." John answered, "No one can receive anything, unless it has been given to him from Heaven. You yourselves bear me witness that I said, 'I am not the Christ,' but, 'I have been sent before him.' He who has the bride is the bridegroom, but the friend of the bridegroom rejoices greatly because of the bridegroom's voice when he hears him. So this joy of mine is now complete. He must increase, but I must decrease. For the Father loves the Son, and has given all things into his hand. And whoever believes in the Son has everlasting life."

CHAPTER 4

Therefore when JESUS knew that the Pharisees had heard, "JESUS is making and baptizing more disciples than John," (JESUS himself did not baptize, but his disciples) he left Judea, and departed again into Galilee.
And he passed through Samaria, so he came to a city called Sychar, near the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son, Joseph. This was where Jacob's well was. JESUS therefore, being tired from his journey, sat down by the well. It was about the sixth hour, and a woman of Samaria came to draw water. JESUS said to her, "Gimme a drink." For his disciples had gone away into the city to buy food. The Samaritan woman therefore said to him, "How can you, being a Jew, ask for a drink from me, a Samaritan woman?" (For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans) JESUS answered her, "If you knew the gift of GOD, and who it is who asks, you would ask him instead and he would have given you living water." The woman said to him, "Sir, you have nothing to draw with, and the well is deep. From where do you get that living water? Are you greater than our father, Jacob, who gave us the well?" JESUS answered her, "Everyone who drinks of this water will thirst again, but whoever drinks of my water will never thirst again, but have everlasting life."
The woman said to him, "Sir, give me this water, so that I do not get thirsty, neither come all the way here to draw." He said to her, "Go, call your husband, and come here." The woman answered and said to him, "I have no husband."
JESUS said to her, "You said well, 'I have no husband,' for you have had five husbands; and he who you now have is not your husband."[816] The woman said to him, "Sir, I perceive that you are a prophet. Our fathers worshiped in this mountain,[817] and you say that in Jerusalem is the place where people ought to worship." JESUS said to her, "Woman, believe me, the hour comes, that you will worship the Father neither in this mountain nor in Jerusalem. But the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father seeks such to be his worshipers. GOD is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth." The woman said to him, "I know that Messiah comes (he who is called Christ). When he has come, he will declare to us all things." JESUS said to her, "I AM him

---

[814] This passage, I found really troublesome, until I realized that there were two wrinkles. First, it isn't GOD sending us to be punished for not believing in JESUS. The actual condemnation is internalized, as I have witnessed from speaking to atheists. Second, note the person is said to already be condemned. That is, GOD isn't sending them to hell... because they are already living in one of their own making! It is GOD's goal that these also be saved, mainly from a great delusion of suffering.
[815] One of the wicked things that is done is to suppress or distort the Gospel so JESUS is seen as distant to us. For example, that Christ rose again but he's coming again at some later time. Or that the death of JESUS happened long ago and is no longer relevant. JESUS is GOD With Us, though. It is impossible for him to be distant.
[816] Here he has knowledge that can only come from GOD. More importantly, he doesn't come to judge her sins.
[817] The Samarians are of the same descent as the Jews, but the Jews built the temple, whereas the mountain they are referring to is Mount Gerizim, the mountain actually where Noah landed. The Samarians were every bit Jews, but the Jews did not accept them because of different history and places of worship.

speaking to you."
At this, his disciples came. They were surprised that he was speaking with a woman, yet no one said, "What are you looking for?" or, "Why do you speak with her?" So the woman left her water pot, and went away into the city, and said to the people, "Come, see a man who told me everything that I did. Can this be the Christ?"
The disciples urged him, saying, "Rabbi, eat." But he said to them, "I have food to eat that you do not know about." The disciples therefore said one to another, "Has anyone brought him something to eat?" JESUS said to them, "My food is to do the will of him who sent me, and to accomplish his work. Do you not say, 'There are yet four months until the harvest?' He who reaps receives wages, and gathers fruit to everlasting life; that both he who sows and he who reaps may rejoice together. I sent you to reap that for which you have not labored."
Meanwhile, that woman told others in her town about him. From that city many of the Samaritans believed in him because of the word of the woman, who testified, "He told me everything that I did." So when the Samaritans came to him, they asked him to stay with them. He stayed there two days. Many more believed because of his word. They said to the woman, "Now we also believe for ourselves, for we have heard and know that this is indeed the Savior of the world."
On the way out, he healed a man who had crippled himself from attempting to steal a horse, who could not longer care for himself due to his sins. He also planted a field for the man and his family.[818] Lastly, he attended worship with the Samaritans before leaving.[819]
After the two days, he departed from there to Galilee. So when he came into Galilee, the Galileans received him, having seen all the things that he did in Jerusalem at the feast, for they also went to the feast. But he was able to do no wonders within his home town. For JESUS himself testified that a prophet has no honor in his own country.
JESUS came therefore again to Cana of Galilee, where he made the water into wine. There was a certain nobleman whose son was sick at Capernaum. When he heard that JESUS had come out of Judea into Galilee, he went to him, and pleaded with him that he would come down and heal his son, for he was close to death. JESUS therefore said to him, "Unless you see signs and wonders, you will in no way believe." The nobleman said to him, "Sir, come down before my child dies." JESUS said to him, "Go your way. Your son lives." As the man returned home, his servants met him with the good news. So he inquired of them the hour when he began to get better, and found that it was the same hour JESUS said that he lived. And so he believed, as did his whole house.

CHAPTER 5

After these things, JESUS went up to Jerusalem. Now in Jerusalem by the sheep area there is a pool, which is called in Hebrew, "*Beth Hesda*," having five porches. In these lay a multitude of those who were sick. For an angel went down at a certain season into the pool, and blessed the water: and any who were first to step in after this was made whole of any disease he had. A certain man was there, who had been totally lame for thirty-eight years. When JESUS saw him lying there, "Do you want to be made well?" The sick man answered him, "Sir, I have no one to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up, but while I am coming, another steps down before me." JESUS said to him, "Arise, take up your mat, and walk." Immediately, the man was made well, and took up his mat and walked. Now it was the Sabbath on that day. So the Jewish leaders said to him who was cured, "It is the Sabbath. It is not lawful for you to carry the mat."[820] But he answered them, "The one who made me well, that one said to me, 'Take up your mat, and walk.'" Then they asked him who did this. But the one who was healed did not know who it was, for JESUS had withdrawn into the crowd. Afterward JESUS found him in the temple, and said to him, "See, you are made well." But the Pharisees discovered this. For this cause the Jewish leaders persecuted JESUS, because he did these things on the Sabbath.

---

[818] I added this paragraph to show that JESUS has compassion for sinners and outsiders.
[819] This is a tie-in to the part about places of worship not really mattering. It's that you worship in spirit and in truth. Thematically, the Samaritans have only five scrolls of Moses, like the Jews only have the Old Testament, and this book has entire added books. The canon of a religion doesn't matter. GOD forgives us our sins.
[820] Priorities are skewed here. Nobody gave a damn that a man was healed miraculously. Instead, they fuss over carrying a bed. The kosher rules for Sabbath are pointed out as the utmost lack of compassion. This is also a contrast between the previous meeting with the Samaritans.

During this time, a zealot known as Simon sought to commit an assassination against a Roman official, but the man that JESUS healed was his brother. And when Simon the Zealot saw his brother cured of his ailment, he walked away from the assassination, and also sought to follow JESUS.[821]
Now the Jewish leaders sought all the more to kill him. JESUS therefore answered them, "Truly, truly, I tell you, the Son does[822] nothing for himself, but follows what he sees the Father doing, and the Son also does likewise. For the Father loves the Son, and shows him all things that he himself does. He will show him greater works than these, so that you may marvel. For as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, even so the Son also gives life to who he desires. For the Father judges no one, but he has given all judgement to the Son, that all may honor the Son, even as they honor the Father. Whoever does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent him."
He continued, "Truly, truly, I tell you, he who hears my word, and believes him who sent me does not come into judgement, but has passed out of death into life. Truly, truly, I tell you, the dead will hear the Son of GOD'S voice, and those who hear will live. For as the Father has life in himself, even so he gave to the Son also to have life in himself. Do not be amazed at this, for the hour comes, in which all that are in the tombs will hear his voice, and will come out. You have neither heard his voice at any time, nor seen his form. You do not have his word living in you, because you do not believe him who he sent. You search the scriptures, because you think that in them you have everlasting life (and indeed these prophesy about me). But you are unwilling to come to me so that you may have life. I do not receive glory from people. But I know you, that you do not have GOD'S love in yourselves. I have come in my Father's name, and you do not receive me. If another comes in his own name, you will receive him.[823] How can you believe, who receive glory from one another, and you do not seek the glory that comes from the only GOD? Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father. But even Moses accuses you, on who you have set your hope. For if you believed Moses, you would believe me, for he wrote about me. But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe my words?"

CHAPTER 6

After these things, JESUS went away to the other side of the sea of Galilee, which is also called the Sea of Tiberias. A large crowd followed him, because they saw the miracles which he did on those who were sick. JESUS went up into the mountain, and he sat there with his disciples. Now the Passover was coming. JESUS therefore lifting up his eyes, and seeing that a large crowd was coming to him, said to Philip, "Where are we to buy bread, that these may eat?" This he said to test him, for he himself knew what he would do. Philip answered him, "Two hundred denarii worth of bread is not sufficient for them, that everyone of them may receive a little."
One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, said to him, "There is a boy here who has five barley loaves and two fish, but what are these among so many?" JESUS said, "Have the people sit down." Now there was much grass in that place. So the men sat down, in number about five thousand. JESUS took the loaves and fishes, gave thanks, then he distributed to the disciples, and the disciples gave in turn to those who were sitting down. When they were filled, he said to his disciples, "Gather up the broken pieces which are left over, that nothing be lost." And they filled twelve baskets with broken pieces, which were left over by those who had eaten. And when the people saw the sign which he did, they said, "This is truly the Prophet who comes into the world." But JESUS saw that they were about to come to make him king,[824] and he withdrew again to the mountain by himself.

---

[821] I added in this paragraph to make for good drama.
[822] A Muslim picked apart the "can do nothing" of the original text, citing JESUS as powerless. This text actually refers to him following the will of the Father.
[823] The world wants a false Christ that comes in his own name in order to suit their purposes. Some of them want a Messiah for vengeance against the secular world. Others want a world leader to give them all sorts of earthly rewards. Basically nobody wants JESUS, who comes in his father's Name. More interestingly, I watched a video that talked about how "Muhammad" at the time lacks vowels, and there was a similar word that basically means "messiah." So Islam came from a false Messiah claim.
[824] There are two things to notice here. First, in the original text (I've been known to alter text), the other gospel have that there were five thousand people, but not that they wanted to make JESUS a king. And more importantly, JESUS rejects such ambition. This is not why he is here.

When evening came, his disciples went down to the sea, and they entered into the boat, and were going over the sea to Capernaum. It was now dark, and JESUS had not yet come to them. The sea was tossed by a great wind blowing. When therefore they had rowed about three or four miles, they saw JESUS walking on the sea, and drawing near to the boat. They were afraid, certain that it was a ghost. But he said to them, "It's me. Do not be afraid." And so, they received him into the boat. And the boat immediately stilled of its rocking, and they were able to reach their destination.

The next day, the crowd wondered at how JESUS had left, for they saw that there had been no other boat there, and JESUS had not entered with his disciples into the boat, but his disciples had gone away alone. When the crowd saw that JESUS and his disciples were not there, they got into their own boats, and came to Capernaum in hopes of seeing him.

When they found him on the other side of the sea, they asked him, "Rabbi, when did you come here?" JESUS answered them, "Truly, truly, I tell you, you seek me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate of the loaves, and were filled. Do not work for the food which perishes, but for the food which remains to everlasting life, which the Son of Man will give to you, for GOD has sealed him." They said therefore to him, "What must we do, that we may work the works of GOD?" JESUS answered them, "This is the work of GOD, that you believe in him who he has sent."

They said therefore to him, "What then do you do for a sign, that we may see, and believe you? What work do you do? Our fathers ate the manna in the wilderness. As it is written, 'He gave them bread out of Heaven to eat.'" JESUS therefore said to them, "Truly, truly, I tell you, it was not Moses who gave you the bread out of Heaven, but my Father gives you the true Bread of Life. For the bread of GOD is that which comes down out of Heaven, and gives life to the world." Their mouths began to water. They said therefore to him, "LORD, always give us this bread."[825]

JESUS said to them, " I AM the Bread of Life. He who comes to me will not be hungry, and he who believes in me will never be thirsty. But you have seen me, and yet you do not believe. All those who the Father gives me will come to me. Those who come to me, I will in no way throw out. For I have come down from Heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of him who sent me."

The Jewish people therefore murmured concerning him, because he said, "I AM the bread which came down out of Heaven." They said, "Is not this JESUS, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How then does he say, 'I have come down out of Heaven?'" Therefore JESUS answered them, "Do not murmur among yourselves. No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him. It is written in the Prophets, 'And they will all be taught by GOD.' Therefore everyone who hears and learns from the Father comes to me. Not that anyone has seen the Father, except he who is from GOD. Truly, truly, I tell you, he who believes has everlasting life for I AM the Bread of Life. Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died. But anyone may eat of my flesh, and will live

[825] I think here, JESUS is trying to impress upon a group of hungry people the idea that GOD can give us what we need, and our priority should be GOD. And they're like "Who cares? Just hand us some bread."

forever."
The Jews therefore argued with one another, saying, "How can this one give us flesh to eat?" JESUS therefore said to them, "Truly I tell you, any who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has everlasting life, and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is food indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood lives in me, and I in him. As the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so also he who feeds on me will live because of me. This is the bread which came down out of Heaven, that he who eats this bread will live forever."
He said these things in the synagogue, as he taught in Capernaum. Therefore many of his disciples, when they heard this, said, "This is a hard saying. Who can hear it?" But JESUS knowing in himself that his disciples murmured at this, said to them, "Does this cause you to stumble? Then what if you would see the Son of Man ascending to where he was before? It is the Spirit who gives life. The flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are spirit, and are life. But there are some of you who do not believe."
At this, many of his former disciples went back, and walked no more with him. JESUS said therefore to the twelve, "You do not also want to go away, do you?" Simon Peter answered him, "LORD, to who would we go? You have the words of everlasting life. We have come to believe and know that you are the Holy One of GOD." And JESUS answered them, "Did I not choose you, the twelve?"
Later that day, he walked about in a forest, and he saw a fox in the distance. And JESUS, being friends with the animals, called the little fox over, and it came. But a nearby snake spooked the animal and it drew blood. Seeing it had hurt him, it licked his wounds. And JESUS continued to pet the animal to calm it, and in so doing, the blood of his hands rubbed on its fur. To this day, foxes are now a reddish color.[826]

CHAPTER 7

JESUS was walking in Galilee after this. He wouldn't walk in Judea because the religious leaders wanted to kill him. The Feast of Tents (Sukkot) was about to happen. And even his own brothers understand him, for they said, "Go away from here, and go into Judea, that your disciples may see your works that you are doing. For no one does anything in secret when he himself seeks to be known openly. If you do these things, show yourself to the world." JESUS therefore said to them, "My time has not yet come, but your time is always ready. The world cannot hate you, but it hates me, because I testify about it, that its works are evil. You go up to the feast. I am not yet going up to this feast, because my time is not yet fulfilled." After he had said this, he stayed in Galilee. But while his brothers had gone up to the feast, he also went up, not publicly, but as it were in secret. And the Jewish leaders therefore sought him at the feast, and said, "Where is he?" And the crowds murmured concerning him. Some said, "He is a good man." But others said, "Not so, but he leads the crowd astray." Yet no one spoke openly of him for fear of the Jewish leaders.
But in the middle of the feast, JESUS came into the temple and taught. Then the Jewish leaders were astonished, and asked how he could teach.[827] JESUS therefore answered them, "My teaching is not mine, but his who sent me. If anyone desires to do his will, he will know about the teaching, whether it is from GOD, or if I am speaking from myself. He who speaks from himself seeks his own glory, but he who seeks the glory of him who sent him is true, and no unrighteousness is in him. Did not Moses give you the law, and yet none of you keeps the law? Why do you seek to kill me?"
The leaders answered, "You have a demon. Who seeks to kill you?" JESUS answered them, "I did one work, and you are all amazed. Moses has given you circumcision (not that it is of Moses, but of the fathers), and on the Sabbath you circumcise a boy.[828] If a boy receives circumcision on the Sabbath, that the law of Moses may not be broken, are you angry with me, because I made a man completely healthy on the Sabbath?"
Two of them said to each other, "Is not this the one who they seek to kill? He speaks openly, and they

---

[826] This is a just-so story, which also serves to teach that not only the righteous sheep (JESUS's followers) are saved by the flesh and blood of Christ, but also the unrighteous and flawed. This is a direct tie-in to his earlier statement about whoever will eat his flesh and drink his blood will have eternal life. It also shows that JESUS loves animals.
[827] The Jewish leaders ask "How he can know so much having not been educated." JESUS clearly was educated though, just probably not by them.
[828] JESUS is thus accusing the Jews themselves of breaking the Sabbath.

say nothing to him. Can it be that the leaders indeed know that this is the Christ? However we know where this man comes from, but when the Christ comes, no one will know where he comes from."
JESUS therefore called out in the temple, teaching and saying, "You both know me, and know where I am from. I have not come of myself, but from GOD who sent me. I know him, because I am from him." They sought therefore to take him; but no one laid a hand on him, because his hour had not yet come. But many in the crowd believed in him. They said, "When the Christ comes, he won't do more signs than those which this man has done, will he?"
The Pharisees heard the crowd murmuring these things concerning him, and the chief priests and the Pharisees sent officers to arrest him. Then JESUS said, "I will be with you a little while longer, then I go to him who sent me. You will seek me, but where I am, you cannot come." The Jewish leaders therefore said among themselves, "Where will this man go that we won't find him? Will he go to the Diaspora among the Greeks, and teach the Greeks? What does he mean, 'Where I am, you cannot come'?"
Now on the last and greatest day of the feast, JESUS stood and said in a loud voice, "If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. He who believes in me, as the scripture has said, from within him will flow rivers of living water." He said this about the Spirit, which those believing in him were to receive. And when the crowd heard this, they said, "This is the Prophet," and also, " This is the Messiah who has come." But others murmured, "He comes from Nazareth. Can anything good come out of Nazareth? Didn't the scripture said that the Christ comes of the offspring of David, and from Bethlehem, the village where David was?" And so there was a division in the crowd because of him. Some of them would have arrested him, but no one laid hands on him.
The officers therefore came to the chief priests and Pharisees, and they said to them, "Why did you not arrest him?" The officers answered, "No man ever spoke like this man." The Pharisees therefore asked them, "You are not also led astray, are you? Have any of the leaders believed in him, or of the Pharisees?"
Nicodemus (he who came to him before, being one of them) said to them, "Does our law judge a man, unless it first hears from him personally and knows what he does?" They answered him, "Are you also from Galilee? Search the scriptures, and you will see that no prophet comes from Galilee." For they did not know he was from Bethlehem, or lived in Nazareth. Then everyone went to his own house. But JESUS went to the Mount of Olives.
Now very early in the morning, he came again into the temple, and all the people came to him, and he sat down and taught them. Then the scribes and the Pharisees brought a woman taken in adultery, and having set her in the midst, they said to him, "Teacher, we found this woman in adultery, in the very act. Now in the law, Moses commanded us to stone such. So what do you say?" Now they said this to test him, that they might have something to accuse him of. But JESUS stooped down, and wrote on the ground with his finger. But when they continued asking him, he looked up and said to them, "He who is without sin among you, let him throw the first stone at her." Again he stooped down, and with his finger wrote on the ground.[829] But when they heard it, they went out one by one, beginning from the oldest, even to the last, and he was left alone with the woman where she was, in the middle. Then JESUS, standing up, said to her, "Woman, where are they? Did no one condemn you?" And she said, "No one, LORD." And JESUS said, "Neither do I condemn you. Go, and sin no more."[830]
At another time, a Roman magistrate was using a slave to carry his own body, and the man's back gave out. For the people of Rome were accustomed to ruling over others, but even considering this, this was excessive. For this Roman was a spoiled noble who thought he could do anything, having received a title at a very young age. And while the man was lying on the ground and in pain, he demanded the slave be whipped to death. But the Pharisees, seeing an opportunity, asked JESUS, "Wait, let him decide what is to be done with this man. And if it is unlawful, have him arrested." So JESUS asked them, "Do you know what Moses and the teachers of the law wrote concerning slavery, do you not?" So they quoted, "According to the law, when you acquire a Hebrew slave, he will serve six

---

[829] It is probable that he was writing down each of their sins, because from the rest of what he said, it was clear that none of them were worthy enough to cast the first stone.
[830] There are great deal of condemning passages in the New Testament, to the point where I edited some of these out. This seems more like the real JESUS, the others seem like add-ins by more Jewish Christians.

years; in the seventh year he will go free, without payment. If he came single, he will leave single. If he had a wife, his wife will leave with him. If his master gave him a wife, and she has borne him children, the wife and her children will belong to the master, and he will leave alone. But if he loves his master and does not wish to go free, his master will take him before the LORD, to the doorpost and his ear will be pierced, so that he remain a slave for life. As for a female slave, there is no need for a man ever to free such a slave. If he doesn't want her, he can let her be freed but he may not sell her, or he may marry her to his son. If he marries someone else, he must continue to support her. If he violates her rights, he must free her." Some of the religious leaders disagreed, "The law also says that you must not have a slave go empty-handed." Others said, "Did not Jeremiah condemn it wholly, saying these words, 'Woe to him who builds his palace by unrighteousness, his upper rooms by injustice, making his own people work for nothing, not paying them for their labor'?" And still others said, "In any case, every forty-nine years, a Jubilee is supposed to be announced, and the fiftieth year, the slaves are to be set free." JESUS said, "But do you not remember your own past? You yourselves were slaves, yet the LORD set you free by the help of Moses. Therefore, now is the appointed year. Your slavery is healed. ***So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.***"[831] And JESUS touched the chains of the man on the ground, and there was a light. Then they were severed in several places, but the man's hands were untouched. And he got up from the ground, and knelt before JESUS. The Jewish leaders were outraged, "By what right do you do this? This is clearly unlawful! Arrest this man!" The man picked up the chains and examined them, and was too preoccupied to hear them. And JESUS said, "You would have me chained up for freeing another? Do you not know the words of Isaiah, 'The Spirit of the LORD is upon me to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to bind up the brokenhearted, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound'?" At this, they picked up stones and asked him, "Do you claim to speak for the Messiah? Or do you claim to be him? Answer carefully, for your next words could be your last!" But JESUS never had the chance to answer, for the magistrate said, "Hold it!" And he pointed dramatically ahead as he said those words, "Do you want yourselves to be arrested for violence and taking the law into your own hands? I have not stated whether this man is guilty or innocent yet!" So the Pharisees asked him, "What then, is your verdict?" Then he explained, "Roman law on slavery is less... merciful than in Jewish culture. Many conquered people are our slaves, including skilled trades like medics. And if a slave runs away, they can expect a harsh sentence. A slave can be freed by his master, they can buy themselves out of slavery, or slave women may free themselves by marrying their master. Finally, a slave can be officially offered manumission, kneeling before a magistrate such as myself. I have been given authority to do many things, but look at this! This man simply said the word and it was broken in a way that I have never seen before. These chains are cut from the inside outward, and even now they continue to cut, turning into iron sand. This man wields great authority, where even the spirits obey him! It is right for this slave to kneel before him, for his kingdom is not of this world. If he wishes anyone free, they are free without question." The Pharisees still wanted to stone him, but they could not while under Roman supervision.

Another time, JESUS spoke to the crowd, saying, "I AM the Light of the World. He who follows me will not walk in the darkness, but will have the light of life." The Pharisees therefore said to him, "You testify about yourself. Your testimony is not valid." JESUS answered them, "Even if I testify about myself, my testimony is true, for I know where I came from, and where I am going; but you do not know where I came from, or where I am going. You judge according to the flesh. I judge no one. Even if I do judge, my judgement is true, for I AM NOT ALONE[832], but I AM with the Father who sent me. It's also written in your law that the testimony of two people is valid. I am one who testifies about myself, and the Father who sent me testifies about me."[833] They asked him, "Where is your Father?" JESUS answered, "You know neither me, nor my Father. If you knew me, you would know my Father also." JESUS said therefore again to them, "You will seek me, and you will die in your sins. Where I go, you

---

[831] Original quote is "Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who practices sin is a slave to sin. The slave does not remain in the house forever; the son remains forever. So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed."

[832] This is GOD's real name. GOD says that it is not good to be alone. And since GOD is good, JESUS is defining his own name. Immanuel, or "GOD is with us."

[833] That's insane. JESUS is effectively saying that he can declare himself as two witnesses. This is peak troll.

cannot come." The Jewish leaders therefore said, "Will he kill himself, that he says, 'Where I am going, you cannot come?'" He said to them, "You are from beneath. I am from above. You are of this world. I am not of this world." They said therefore to him, "Who are you?" JESUS said to them, "I AM just what I have been saying to you from the beginning. I have many things to speak concerning you from he who sent me. And the things which I heard from him, these I say to the world." They did not understand that he spoke to them about the Father. JESUS therefore said to them, "When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will know that I AM him. The Father hasn't left me alone, for I always do the things that please him." As he spoke these things, many believed in him. JESUS therefore said to those Judeans who had believed him, "If you remain in my word, then you are truly my disciples. You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." But some of the Jewish leaders answered him, "We are Abraham's descendants, and have never been in bondage to anyone. How can you say, 'You will be made free?'" JESUS answered them, "Truly I tell you, everyone who commits sin is the slave of sin. A slave can be freed, and will leave the house. A son remains forever. Again I say to you, if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed. You say that you are Abraham's descendants, yet you seek to kill me, because my word finds no place in you. I tell you the things which I have seen with my Father; but you also do the things from your father." They answered him, "Our father is Abraham."

JESUS said to them, "If Abraham was your father, you would do the works of Abraham. But now you seek to kill me, who has told you the truth from GOD. Abraham did not do this. You do the works of your real father." Therefore JESUS said to them, "If GOD were your father, you would love me, for I came out from GOD. Why do you not understand my speech? Because you cannot hear my word. You are of your real father, Satan, and you want to do the desires of him. He is an accuser and has been a murderer from the beginning, and he does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. But because I tell the truth, you do not believe me. Which of you convicts me of sin? If I tell the truth, why do you not believe me? He who is of GOD hears the words of GOD. You do not hear, because you are not of GOD." Then the Judeans answered him, "We speak well that you are a Samaritan, and have a demon." JESUS answered, "I do not have a demon, but I honor my Father, and you dishonor me. But I do not seek my own glory. If anyone keeps my word, he will never see death." Then the Judeans said to him, "Now we know that you have a demon. Abraham died, and the prophets; and you say, 'If anyone keeps my word, he will never taste of death.' Are you greater than our father, Abraham, who died? The prophets died. Who do you make yourself out to be?" JESUS answered, "If I glorify myself, my glory is nothing. It is my Father who glorifies me. Abraham saw my coming, and he rejoiced."[834] The Judeans asked him, "You are not yet fifty years old. How have you seen Abraham?" JESUS said, "Truly, truly, I tell you, before Abraham came into existence, I AM." Therefore they took up stones to throw at him, but JESUS found cover and went out of the temple.

CHAPTER 8

Before the Passover, JESUS came to Bethany. So they prepared a dinner for him there; and Martha served, but Lazarus was one of those reclining at the table with him. Mary, therefore, took a pound of ointment of pure nard, very precious, and anointed the feet of JESUS, and wiped his feet with her hair. And the house was filled with the fragrance of the ointment. [835] Then Judas Iscariot, one of his disciples, who would betray him, said, "Why was this ointment not sold for three hundred denarii, and given to the poor?" Now Judas did not necessarily say this out of caring for the poor, as he was in charge of the treasury, and the other disciples had doubts about him.[836] But JESUS said, "Leave her alone, that she may keep this for the day of my burial. For you always have the poor with you, but you do not always have me."

Now JESUS went toward Jerusalem for his time was coming. And on the way as he passed by, he saw a man blind from birth. And his disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that

---

[834] This refers to the incident with Isaac and the sacrifice.

[835] Messiah means "anointed" (usually with oil). This is the manner of JESUS's anointment.

[836] There's this whole passage about how Judas was a thief and used to steal from the money box. This feels like when someone leaves a cult, and they talk bad about them, or when someone breaks up, and they think of excuses why they were a horrible person. Every one of JESUS's disciples were sinners, and he loved them all. It is commonly believed that Judas was a bit of a zealot, and betrayed him because he wasn't the sort of Messiah they thought. I mentioned it, but softened it a bit.

he was born blind?" JESUS answered, "Neither did this man sin, nor his parents; but, that the works of GOD might be revealed in him. We must work the works of him who sent me, while it is day. The night is coming, when no one can work. As I have told you, I AM the Light of the World." When he had said this, he spat on the ground, made mud with the saliva, anointed the blind man's eyes with the mud, and said to him, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam" (which means "Sent"). So he was sent away, washed, and came back seeing. The neighbors therefore, and those who saw that he was a beggar before, said, "Is this not the one who used to sit and beg?" He admitted he was the one. They therefore were asking him, "How were your eyes opened?" He answered, "A man called JESUS made mud, anointed my eyes, and said to me, 'Go to Siloam, and wash.' So I went away and washed, and I received sight." Then they asked him, "Where is he?" He said, "I do not know."
They brought him who had been blind to the Pharisees. Now it was a Sabbath on the day when JESUS made the mud and opened his eyes. Again therefore the Pharisees also asked him how he received his sight. He said to them, "He put mud on my eyes, I washed, and I see." The Pharisees objected, "This man JESUS cannot be from GOD, because he does not keep the Sabbath." Others said, "How can a man who is a sinner do such signs?" There was division among them. Therefore they asked the blind man again, "What do you say about him, because he opened your eyes?" He said, "He is a prophet."
The Jewish leaders therefore did not believe concerning him, that he had been blind, and had received his sight, until they called the parents of him who had received his sight, and asked them, "Is this your son, who you say was born blind? How then does he now see?" His parents answered them, "We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind. But as for how he now sees, we do not know. He is of age. Ask him, and he will speak for himself." His parents said these things because they feared the Jewish leaders. For the Jewish leaders had already agreed that if anyone would confess him as the Christ, he would be put out of the synagogue.
So they called the man who was blind a second time, and said to him, "Give glory to GOD instead, for we know that JESUS is a sinner." He therefore answered, "I do not know if he is a sinner. One thing I do know: that though I was blind, now I see." They again questioned him. He answered them, "I told you already, and you did not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? You do not also want to become his disciples, do you?"
They scoffed, "You are his disciple, but we are disciples of Moses. We know that GOD has spoken to Moses. But as for this man, we do not know where he comes from." The man laughed at them, "How amazing. You do not know where he comes from, yet he opened my eyes. We know that GOD does not listen to sinners, but if anyone is a worshiper of GOD, and does his will, he listens to him. Since the world began it has never been heard of that a sinner opened the eyes of someone born blind, but through the power of GOD. If this man were not from GOD, he could do nothing."
"You were altogether born in sins, and do you dare teach us?" the answered, and they threw him out.
JESUS heard that they had thrown him out, and finding him, he said, "Do you believe in the Son of Man?" He answered, "Who is he, LORD, that I may believe in him?" JESUS said to him, "You have seen him, and it is him who speaks with you." He said, "LORD, I believe." and he worshiped him.[837]
JESUS said, "I came into this world that those who do not see may see; and that those who see may become blind." Those of the Pharisees who were with him heard these things, and said to him, "Are we also blind?" JESUS said to them, "If you were blind, you would have no sin; but since you say, 'We see,' your sin remains.

CHAPTER 9

Then JESUS said to his disciples, "Truly, truly, I tell you, one who does not enter by the door into the sheepfold, but climbs up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber. But one who enters in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep listen to his voice. He calls his own sheep by name, and leads them out. The sheep follow him, for they know his voice. They will by no means follow a stranger, but will flee from him; for they do not know the voice of strangers." But they did not understand what he was telling them. JESUS therefore said to them again, "He who is a hired hand and not a shepherd, does not own the sheep and the sheep means nothing to him, and when he sees the wolf coming, he leaves the sheep and runs away. And

[837] JESUS is fully human and GOD. He is able to be worshipped and forgive sins, yet has many human flaws.

the wolf snatches them. Truly, truly, I tell you, many who came before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not listen to them. Thieves only come to steal, kill, and destroy. But I AM the Good Shepherd. I came that they may have life, and may have it abundantly. I know my own and my own know me, for I lay down my life for the sheep."
He continued, "I have other sheep, which are not of this fold. I must bring them also, and they will hear my voice. They will become one flock with one shepherd.[838] Therefore the Father loves me, because I lay down my life, that I may take it again. No one takes it away from me, but I lay it down by myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again.[839] I received this commandment from my Father."
But the other Jews, especially the Jewish leaders heard this saying, and decided when he mentioned thieves and robbers, he must be talking about them. Many others said, "He is insane. Why do you listen to him?" But others said, "These are not the sayings of one possessed by a demon. It is not possible for a demon to open the eyes of the blind, is it?"
At that time the Feast of Dedication took place in Jerusalem. It was winter, and JESUS was walking in the temple, in Solomon's porch. The Jewish leaders therefore came around him and said to him, "How long will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Christ, tell us plainly."
JESUS answered them, "I told you, and you do not believe. The works that I do in my Father's name, these testify about me. But you do not believe, because you are not of my sheep. As I said to you, my sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. I give everlasting life to them. They will never perish. No one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand. I and the Father are one." Then the Jewish leaders took up stones again to stone him. JESUS answered them, "I have shown you many good works from the Father. For which of those works do you stone me?" The Jewish leaders answered him, "We do not stone you for a good work, but for blasphemy: because you, being a man, make yourself GOD."
JESUS answered them, "Is it not written in your law, 'I said, you are gods?' If he called them gods, to who the word of GOD came (and the scripture cannot be broken), do you say of him who the Father sanctified and sent into the world, 'You blaspheme,' because I said, 'I AM the Son of GOD?' If I do not do the works of my Father, do not believe me. But if I do them, though you do not believe me, believe the works; that you may know and understand that the Father is in me, and I in the Father."
Now they sought again to seize him, and he went out of their hand. He went away again beyond the Jordan into the place where John was baptizing at first, and there he stayed. Many came to him. They said, "John indeed did no sign, but everything that John said about this man is true." And many believed in him there.

CHAPTER 10

Now a certain man was sick, Lazarus[840] from Bethany, of the village of Mary and her sister, Martha. It was that Mary who had anointed JESUS with ointment, and wiped his feet with her hair, whose brother, Lazarus, was sick. The sisters therefore sent to him, saying, "The one you love is sick." But when JESUS heard it, he said, "This sickness is not to death, but for the glory of GOD, that GOD'S Son may be glorified by it."
Now JESUS loved Martha and her sister Mary, and JESUS dearly loved Lazarus. But when he heard that he was sick, he stayed two days in the place where he was. Then after this he said to the disciples, "Let us go into Judea again." The disciples told him, "Rabbi, the Jewish leaders were just trying to stone you, and are you going there again?" JESUS answered, "Are there not twelve hours of daylight? If anyone walks in the day, he does not stumble, because he sees the light of this world. But if anyone walks in the night, he stumbles, because the light is not in him. What is done openly in the day will not be punished, but those who seek to do evil will come at night."[841] He said to them, "Our friend,

---

[838] There are other religions besides Christianity. History set about each of these religions, but they are like blind men feeling at an elephant. Christ is going to lead all of them to GOD, but as some kind of one-world globalist religion but by showing all of them how they fit into the Gospel.
[839] JESUS is thus saying that neither the Pharisees nor the Romans have any actual power to kill him. Instead, the reason that he is able to rise from the dead is because he gave his life to begin with.
[840] Before this story, the Disciple Who JESUS Loved is not spoken of, but after this, he is a frequent feature.
[841] Prophesying the means of his own arrest.

Lazarus, has fallen asleep, but I am going so that I may awake him out of sleep." Then the disciples said to him, "LORD, if he has fallen asleep, he will wake." So JESUS said to them plainly then, "Lazarus is dead. I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, so that you may believe. Nevertheless, let us go to him." Thomas therefore, who is called Didymus[842], said to his fellow disciples, "Let us go also, that we may die with him."
So when JESUS came, he found that he had been in the tomb four days already.[843] Now Bethany was near Jerusalem, about two miles away. Many of the Jewish people had come to Martha and Mary, to console them concerning their brother. Then when Martha heard that JESUS was coming, she went and met him, but Mary stayed in the house. Therefore Martha said to JESUS, "LORD, if you would have been here, my brother would not have died. Even now I know that whatever you ask of GOD, GOD will give you."
JESUS said to her, "Your brother will rise again." Martha said to him, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day." JESUS said to her, "I AM the Resurrection and the Life. He who believes in me will still live, even if he dies. And whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?" She said to him, "Yes, LORD. I have come to believe that you are the Christ, the Son of GOD, he who comes into the world."
And when she had said this, she went away, and called Mary, her sister, secretly, saying, "The Teacher is here." When she heard this, she arose quickly, and went to him. Now JESUS had not yet come into the village, but was still in the place where Martha met him. Then the Judeans who were with her in the house, and were consoling her, when they saw Mary, that she rose up quickly and went out, followed her, supposing that she was going to the tomb to weep there. Therefore when Mary came to where JESUS was, and saw him, she fell down at his feet, saying to him, "LORD, if you would have been here, my brother would not have died." When JESUS therefore saw her weeping, and the Judeans weeping who came with her, he was deeply moved in spirit and was troubled, and said, "Where have you put him?" They told him, "LORD, come and see." Tears filled JESUS's eyes.[844]
The Judeans therefore said, "See how he loved him."[845] But some of them said, "Could not this man, who opened the eyes of him who was blind, have also kept this man from dying?" So JESUS, deeply moved again, came to the tomb. Now it was a cave, and a stone lay against it. JESUS said, "Take away the stone." Martha, the sister of the dead man, said to him, "LORD, by this time there is a stench, for he has been dead four days." JESUS said to her, "Did I not tell you that if you believed, you would see GOD'S glory?" So they took away the stone. And JESUS lifted up his eyes, and said, "Father, I thank you that you listened to me. I know that you always listen to me, but I pray that the crowd also believe that you sent me."
When he had said this, he shouted with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out." The man who had died came out, bound hand and foot with wrappings, and his face was wrapped around with a cloth. JESUS said to them, "Free him."
A large crowd therefore of the Judeans learned that he was there, and they came, not for JESUS' sake only, but that they might see Lazarus also, who he had raised from the dead. But the chief priests plotted to kill Lazarus also, because on account of him many of the Jewish people went away and believed in JESUS.

CHAPTER 11

Therefore many of the Judeans, who came to Mary and had seen the things which he did, believed in him. But some of them went away to the Pharisees, and told them the things which JESUS had done.
The chief priests therefore and the Pharisees gathered a council, and said, "What are we doing? For this man does many signs. If we leave him alone like this, everyone will believe in him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation."
But a certain one of them, Caiaphas, being high priest that year, said to them, "You know nothing at all, nor do you consider that it is advantageous for you that one man should die for the people, and

---

[842] Meaning "the Twin"
[843] Common Jewish belief was that the dead were confused for three days and tried to return, then passed on to the Afterlife. But JESUS called Lazarus *from* the Afterlife.
[844] Traditionally this is "JESUS wept." This is based on a Japanese translation of the text.
[845] Here, they come out and tell us that JESUS loved him. None of the other dead raised have this response from JESUS.

that the whole nation not perish."
Now he did not say this of himself, but being high priest that year, he prophesied that JESUS would die for the nation. And not for the nation only, but that he might also gather together into one the children of GOD who are scattered abroad. So from that day on, they plotted to kill him.
JESUS therefore walked no more openly among the Judeans, but departed from there into the country near the wilderness, to a city called Ephraim; and stayed there with his disciples. Now the Jewish Passover was near, and many went up from the country to Jerusalem before the Passover, to purify themselves. Then they sought for JESUS and spoke one with another, as they stood in the temple, "What do you think? Is he not coming to the feast at all?" The chief priests and the Pharisees had given orders that if anyone knew where he was, he should report it, that they might arrest him.

CHAPTER 12

On the next day the large crowd that had come to the feast heard that JESUS was coming to Jerusalem, they took the branches of the palm trees, and went out to meet him, and were shouting, "Hosanna. Blessed is the one who comes in the name of GOD, King of Israel."
And JESUS, having found a young donkey, sat on it. To this day, donkeys have a cross-shaped mark because he rode on this one.[846] In this he fulfilled what is written, "Do not be afraid, daughters of Zion, your King comes, sitting on a donkey's colt." His disciples did not understand these things at first, but later they remembered that these things were written about him, and that they had done them. The crowd that was with him when he called Lazarus out of the tomb, were testifying about it. The Pharisees therefore said among themselves, "See how we accomplish nothing, the whole world has gone after him." Now there were certain Greeks among those that went up to worship at the feast. These, therefore, came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida of Galilee, and asked him, saying, "Sir, we want to see JESUS."
Philip came and told Andrew, and in turn, Andrew came with Philip, and they told JESUS. And JESUS answered them, "The time has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. Truly, truly, I tell you, unless a grain of wheat falls into Earth and dies, it remains by itself alone. But if it dies, it bears much fruit. My spirit is troubled. And what should I say? 'Father, save me from this hour?' But for this cause I came to this hour. So I say, 'Father, glorify your name.'" Then there came a voice out of the sky, saying, "***I have glorified it, and will glorify it again.***" The crowd therefore, who stood by and heard it, were terrified. And they made up for themselves explanations. Some said that it had thundered. While others said, "An angel has spoken to him." JESUS answered, "This voice hasn't come for my sake, but for your sake. When I am lifted up from Earth, will draw everyone to myself." He said this to proclaim by what kind of death he should die. The crowd answered him, "We have heard out of the law that the Messiah remains forever. How can you say that?"
JESUS therefore said to them, "Yet a little while the light is with you. Walk while you have the light, that darkness does not overtake you. Believe in the light, that you may become children of light."
JESUS said these things, and he departed and hid himself from them. But though he had done so many signs before them, yet they did not believe in him, that the word of Isaiah the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spoke, "Who has believed our report, and to who has the hand of GOD been revealed?" For this cause they could not believe, for Isaiah said again, "He has blinded their eyes and hardened their heart, lest they should see with their eyes, and understand with their heart, and turn, and I would heal them." And thus, his words sounded insane to those who are part of the world, but not to those who would be part of Christ.[847]
For Isaiah said these things because he saw his glory, and spoke of him. Nevertheless even of the leaders many believed in him, but because of the Pharisees they did not confess it, so that they would not be put out of the synagogue, for they loved praise from people more than praise from GOD.
Then JESUS shouted out and said, "Whoever believes in me, believes not in me, but in him who sent

[846] This addition is a just-so story. Many donkeys do in fact have a cross-shaped dark patch of fur on their backs.
[847] Indeed, some of JESUS's words do sound insane even to those reading, except through personal encounters with JESUS. There is something beyond this world, which can't always be articulated. There are thus two reasons for the feeling of nonsense. One is trying to speak about what is unspeakable (or as the *Tao te Ching* says "the tao that can be told is not the eternal Tao") and the other is that the language that is used doesn't necessarily match up with the person reading it, in the same way that dreams don't make sense to a third party. But Isaiah speaks of a GOD who doesn't want certain people saved, which I find unacceptable.

me. I have come as a light into the world, that whoever believes in me may see the light of truth. And if anyone hears my words and does not keep them, I do not judge him. For I came not to judge the world, but to save the world. The things therefore which I speak, the Father has said to me, so I speak."

CHAPTER 13

Now before the feast of the Passover, JESUS, knowing that his time had come that he would depart from this world to the Father, having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end. Now JESUS knew that he was going to GOD. SO he arose from the meal, removed his outer garments, then he took a towel, and wrapped it around his waist. Then he poured water into the basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them dry with the towel. Then he came to Simon Peter. He said to him, "LORD, will you wash my feet?" JESUS answered him, "You do not know what I am doing now, but you will understand later." Peter said to him, "You will never wash my feet." JESUS answered him, "If I do not wash you, you have no part with me." Simon Peter said to him, "LORD, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head." JESUS said to him, "Someone who has bathed only needs to have his feet washed, but is completely clean. You are clean, but not all of you."[848]

So when he had washed their feet, put his outer garment back on, and sat down again, he said to them, "Do you know what I have done to you? You call me, 'Teacher' and 'LORD.' You say so correctly, for so I am. If I then, the LORD and the Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you. Truly, truly, I tell you, a servant is not greater than his master, neither one who is sent greater than he who sent him. If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them. I do not speak concerning all of you. I know who I have chosen. But that the scripture may be fulfilled, 'He who ate my bread has lifted up his heel against me. I am telling you this now before it happens, so that when it does happen you may believe."

When JESUS had said this, he was troubled in spirit, and testified, "Truly, truly, I tell you that one of you will betray me." During the meal, the heart of Judas Iscariot had hardened to betray him. The disciples looked at one another, perplexed about who he spoke. One of his disciples, who JESUS loved, was reclining against JESUS' chest. Simon Peter therefore motioned to him to inquire who it was he was talking about. He, leaning back, as he was, on JESUS' chest, asked him, "LORD, who is it?" JESUS therefore answered, "It is the one to who I will give this piece of bread when I have dipped it." So when he had dipped the piece of bread, he gave it to Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot. And he also gave the cup, and drank it with his disciples.[849]

Then JESUS said to him, "What you do, do quickly." Now none of those reclining knew why he said this to him. For some thought, because Judas had the money box, that JESUS said to him, "Buy what things we need for the feast," or that he should give something to the poor. Therefore, having received the piece of bread and the wine from JESUS, he went out immediately; and it was night. And Judas went out, but ran into his sister Deborah. She was married, and they were thinking of having a child. But Judas had no wife or children, and the Iscariot name was in danger of being forgotten. And Deborah said to Judas, "I am proud of you, my brother! For I have seen the palms thrown, I have seen his entry into Jerusalem and I too believe that you are following the Messiah. And soon, when he does for the Romans what Messiah ought to do," she said, for they were both patriotic Jews, "the name of Iscariot will be remembered forever." Now Judas now had misgivings about what sort of Messiah that JESUS was, but he had hope that if he forced JESUS's hand, JESUS would understand what needed to be done. So he thanked her, and left after his own perceived duty.

When he had gone out, JESUS said, "Now the Son of Man has been glorified, and GOD has been glorified in him. Little children, I will be with you a little while longer. You will seek me, and as I said to the Jewish leaders, 'Where I am going, you cannot come.' A new commandment I give to you, that

---

[848] They continued with an editorial about Judas betraying him. But you can also not all be clean, because the feet need washing, just as we usually do have flaws.

[849] Most Christians understand Christianity to be about good vs evil, but the sinful are simply misguided. What actually is sinful is making judgement calls on other people. But many do it, including Christians. Judas was one of the disciples, he simply fell astray. As did Peter, with denying him three times. The wine is an addition here, but I wanted to impress on the fact that Judas did have communion with JESUS.

you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples."[850]
Simon Peter said to him, "LORD, where are you going?" JESUS answered, "Where I am going, you cannot follow now, but you will follow afterwards." Peter said to him, "LORD, why can I not follow you now? I will lay down my life for you." JESUS answered him, "Will you lay down your life for me? Truly, truly, I tell you, the rooster won't crow until you have denied me three times."

CHAPTER 14

But he said, "Do not let your heart be troubled. Believe in GOD. Believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions. If it weren't so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come for you. And you know the way where I am going."
But Thomas said to him, "LORD, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?"
JESUS said to him, "I AM the Way, the Truth, and the Life. Everyone comes to the Father through me. If you know me, you will know my Father also. From now on, you do know him and have seen him."
Philip said to him, "LORD, show us the Father, and that will be enough for us." JESUS said to him, "Have I been with you all this time, and still you do not know me, Philip? He who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father?' Truly, truly, I tell you, he who believes in me, he will do greater works than these. Whatever you ask in my name, this I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you love me, you will keep my commandments. I will pray to the Father, and he will give you another Comforter, that he may be with you forever, the Spirit of Truth, who the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you. I will not leave you orphans, for I will come to you. Yet a little while, and the world will see me no more. But you will see me. Because I live, you will live also. You will know that I AM in my Father, and I AM in you."
Thaddeus said to him, "LORD, what has happened that you are about to reveal yourself to us, and not to the world?" JESUS answered him, "If anyone loves me, he will keep my word. My Father will love him, and make a dwelling place with him. All this I have spoken to you while I am still with you. But the Comforter, the *Ruach ha Kodesh*, who the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things. Peace I leave with you. My peace I give to you. Do not let your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid. I will not speak with you much longer, for this world is coming to condemn me, but it has no hold on me. Arise, let us go from here."
And he said to them, "I AM the True Vine, and my Father is the Gardener. You are the branches. Every branch in me that does not bear fruit, he takes away. Every branch that bears fruit, he prunes, that it may bear more fruit. You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. Remain in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it remains in the vine, so neither can you, unless you remain in me. He who remains in me, and I in him, the same bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing. If anyone does not remain in me, he withers.[851] In this is my Father glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples. Even as the Father has loved me, I also have loved you. If you keep my commandments, you will remain in my love. This is my commandment, that you love one another, even as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that someone lays down his life for his friends. No longer do I call you disciples, for the servant does not know what his master is doing. But I have called you friends, for everything that I heard from my Father I have made known to you. You did not choose me, but I chose you, and appointed you, that you should go and bear fruit. And whatever you will ask of the Father in my name, he may give it to you."

---

[850] JESUS tells many many parables of judgement, as I have discovered from reading and editing. But mercy, not judgement, appears to be the more important teaching. This is precisely why I have tried to cut out all of these teachings, so that teachings of love and mercy might outnumber them. There is sin, and there is the law, because the law is fulfilled, not abolished. But it is important to me that people reading this understand that JESUS should not be seen as another Jew.

[851] Right here, there originally was a saying about being thrown into the fire burned up. Short of cutting more passages, let me clarify something. Even if I believed Revelation's lake of fire was true (which I do not), the lake of fire can be compared to a large kiln. In a kiln, the dross is skimmed out, whereas what is good is melted down. In other words, even by this man's own condemnation, the sinners are being remolded into GOD'S ideal. The vine, likewise, I know from my experience in garden work, that branches tossed into the fire are turned into ash, which then can be used for a number of purposes, but of most relevance, to make soil suitable for growing crops.

And he also said, "If the world hates you, you know that it has hated me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love its own. But because you are not of the world, since I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. Remember the word that I said to you: 'A servant is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you. But all these things will they do to you because of my name, because they do not know him who sent me. When the Comforter has come, who I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, he will testify about me. And you will also testify, because you have been with me from the beginning. I have said all these things to you so that you may be kept from stumbling. They will put you out of the synagogues, but an hour is coming when whoever kills you will think that he is offering a service to GOD.[852] They will do these things because they have not known the Father or me. But I have told you these things, so that when their hour comes, you may remember that I told you about them. I did not tell you these things from the beginning, because I was with you. But because I have told you these things, sorrow has filled your heart."
He explained, "When the Comforter comes, he will convict the world about sin, and about righteousness, and about judgement. About sin, because they do not believe in me; about righteousness, because I am going to the Father, and you won't see me any more; and about judgement, because the prince of this world has been judged. I have yet many things to tell you, but you cannot bear them now. However when the Spirit of GOD has come, he will guide you into all truth, and he will declare to you things that are coming. He will take from what is mine, and will declare it to you. All things that the Father has are mine, that is why I said that he takes of mine, and will declare it to you. You will no longer see me. Then a little while, and you will see me."
Some of his disciples therefore said to one another, "What is this that he says to us, 'You won't see me, then a little while, and you will see me;' and, 'Because I go to the Father?'" So they kept asking. JESUS sighed and told them plainly, "I am going to be condemned, I will die for the sins of all, and I will rise again. You will be sorrowful now, but your sorrow will be turned into joy. A woman has pain when she gives birth. But once she has delivered the child, she does not remember the anguish any more, for the joy that a human being is born into the world. In the same way, the world that comes forth after me will be a new creation. I came forth from the Father and have come into the world. In the same way, I leave the world, and go to the Father before I return to you."
His disciples said to him, "Now you are speaking plainly. By this we believe that you came forth from GOD."
JESUS answered them, "Do you now believe? The time is coming, and has come, that you will be scattered, everyone to his own place, and you will leave me alone. But I AM NOT ALONE, because the Father is with me. I have told you these things, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will continue to have oppression. But cheer up, for I have overcome the world."

CHAPTER 15

JESUS said these things, and lifting up his eyes to Heaven, he said, "Father, the time has come. Glorify your Son, that your Son may also glorify you; even as you gave him authority over all flesh, he will give everlasting life to all who you have given him. This is everlasting life, that they may know you, the only true GOD, and him who you sent, JESUS Christ. I glorified you on Earth by accomplishing the work which you have given me to do. Now, Father, glorify me with your own self with the glory which I had with you before the world existed. I revealed your name to the people who you have given me out of the world. They were yours, and you have given them to me. They have kept your word. Now they have known that all things whatever you have given me are from you, and they have believed that you sent me. I pray for them. I do not pray for the world, for I am no more in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, keep them through your name which you have given me, that they may be one, even as we are. While I was with them, I kept them in your name which you have given me, and I guarded them. But now I come to you, and I say these things in the world, that they may have my joy made full in themselves. I have given them your word. The world

[852] I'm currently watching the movie The Maze Runner, and one of the characters is so fixated on duty and the rules that he wants to tie up the heroes to appease the monsters. This sort of mentality calls back to what Hosea said about desiring mercy not sacrifice. GOD's aim is that we live and work together for common good, not fixate on stupid laws at the expense of the lives of others.

hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. I pray not that you would take them from the world, but that you would keep them from the evil one. Sanctify them in your truth. Not for these only do I pray, but for those also who believe in me through their word, that they may all be one, that the world may believe that you sent me. Father, I desire that they also who you have given me be with me where I am, for you loved me before the foundation of the world."[853]

CHAPTER 16

When JESUS had spoken these words, he went out with his disciples over the wadi of the Kidron, where there was a garden, into which he and his disciples entered. Now Judas, who betrayed him, also knew the place, for JESUS often met there with his disciples. Judas then, having taken a detachment of soldiers and officers from the chief priests and the Pharisees, came there with torches and weapons. JESUS went forth, and said to them, "Who are you looking for?" They answered him, "JESUS of Nazareth." JESUS said to them, "I AM." Judas also, who betrayed him, was standing with them. When therefore he said to them, "I AM," they went backward, and fell to the ground. JESUS said, "If therefore you seek me, let these go their way," that the word might be fulfilled which he spoke, "Of those who you have given me, I have lost none."

Simon Peter therefore, having a sword, drew it, and struck the high priest's servant, and cut off his right ear. The servant's name was Malchus.[854] JESUS therefore said to Peter, "Put the sword into its sheath. Am I not to drink the cup which the Father has given me?" And he healed his ear.

So the detachment, the commanding officer, and the officers of the Jewish leaders, seized JESUS and bound him, and led him to Annas first, for he was father-in-law to Caiaphas the high priest. Simon Peter followed JESUS, as did another disciple. Now that disciple was known to the high priest[855], and entered in with JESUS into the court of the high priest, but Peter was standing at the door outside. So the other disciple went out and spoke to her who kept the door, and brought in Peter.

The high priest therefore asked JESUS about his disciples, and about his teaching. JESUS answered him, "I spoke openly to the world. I always taught in synagogues, and in the temple, where all the Jewish people come together. I said nothing in secret. Why do you ask me? Ask those who have heard what I spoke to them, surely they know what I said."

When he had said this, one of the officers standing by slapped JESUS with his hand, saying, "Do you answer the high priest like that?" JESUS answered him, "If I have spoken evil, testify of the evil; otherwise, why do you beat me?" Annas sent him bound to Caiaphas, the high priest.

Then the maid who kept the door said to Peter, "Are you also one of this man's disciples?" He said, "I am not." Now the servants and the officers were standing there, having made a fire of coals, for it was cold. They were warming themselves. Peter was with them, standing and warming himself. They said therefore to him, "You are not also one of his disciples, are you?" He denied it, and said, "I am not."

One of the servants of the high priest, being a relative of him whose ear Peter had cut off, said, "Did I not see you in the garden with him?" Peter therefore denied it again, just before the rooster crowed. And Peter sat down and cried.

They led JESUS therefore from Caiaphas into the Praetorium. It was early, and they themselves did not enter into the Praetorium, that they might not be defiled, but might eat the Passover. Pilate therefore went out to them, and said, "What accusation do you bring against this man?" They answered him, "If this man weren't an evildoer, we would not have delivered him up to you."[856]

Pilate therefore said to them, "Take him yourselves, and judge him according to your law." Therefore the Jewish leaders said to him, "It is not lawful for us to put anyone to death." Pilate therefore entered again into the Praetorium, called JESUS, and asked him, "Are you then the King of the Jews?"

JESUS answered him, "Do you say this by yourself, or did others tell you about me?" Pilate answered, "I am not a Jew, am I? Your own nation and the chief priests delivered you to me. What have you

---

[853] This is known as a "prayer of the just." A long drawn out prayer consisting of "LORD, we just wanna" this and that. I tried my best to abridge this.

[854] Here the guy is named. In the other passage he is not.

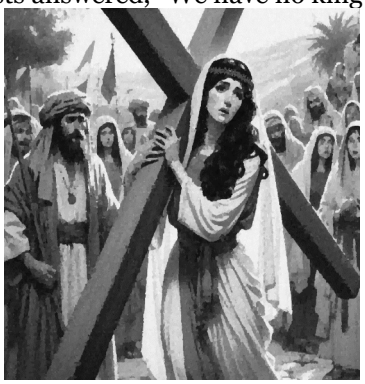
[855] He is famous, and known personally by the priesthood. This is consistent with the idea that it is Lazarus. After all, a person who rose from the dead would be famous.

[856] In other words, it would fail the basic rights of a criminal to have a clear crime. This is a kangaroo court. They don't have a crime to convict him with.

done?" JESUS answered, "My Kingdom is not of this world. If it were, then my disciples would not allow me to be delivered to the Jewish leaders. But now my Kingdom is beyond this world."[857]
Pilate therefore said to him, "Are you a king then?" JESUS answered, "You say that I am a king. For this reason I have been born, and for this reason I have come into the world, that I should testify to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth listens to my voice." Pilate said to him, "What is truth?" When he had said this, he went out again to the Jewish leaders, and said to them, "I find no basis for a charge against him. But you have a custom, that I should release someone to you at the Passover. Therefore do you want me to release to you the King of the Jews?" Then they shouted again, saying, "Not this man, but Barabbas." Now Barabbas was a robber. But because he was a zealot against Rome, the crowd supported this decision.

CHAPTER 17

So Pilate then took JESUS, and flogged him. The soldiers twisted thorns into a crown, and put it on his head, and dressed him in a purple garment. And they kept coming up to him and saying, "Greetings, King of the Jews" and they struck him with their hands. Then Pilate went out again, and said to them, "I am bringing him out to you, that you may know that I find no basis for a charge against him." Then JESUS came out, wearing the crown of thorns[858] and a purple garment. And he said to them, "Here is the man." When therefore the chief priests and the officers saw him, they shouted, saying, "Crucify. Crucify." Pilate said to them, "Take him, and crucify him yourselves. There is nothing wrong with this man."[859]
The Jewish leaders answered him, "We have a law, and by that law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of GOD." When therefore Pilate heard this saying, he was more afraid. He entered into the Praetorium again, and said to JESUS, "Where are you from?" But JESUS gave him no answer. Pilate therefore said to him, "Are you not speaking to me? Do you not know that I have power to release you, and have power to crucify you?" But JESUS answered, "You have no power over me. All of your power was granted from above. Therefore the ones who delivered me to you have greater sin." At this, Pilate was seeking to release him, but the Jewish leaders shouted, saying, "If you release this man, you are not Caesar's friend. Everyone who makes himself a king speaks against Caesar." When Pilate therefore heard these words, he brought JESUS out, and sat down on the judgement seat at a place called "The Pavement," but in Hebrew, "*Gabbatha*."
Now it was the Preparation Day of the Passover, at about noon. He said to the Jewish leaders, "Here is your King." They shouted, "Away with him. Away with him. Crucify him." Pilate said to them, "Should I crucify your King?" The chief priests answered, "We have no king but Caesar."[860]



So then he delivered JESUS to them to be crucified. So they took. And he went out, carrying the cross

[857] This is why we should not care about the moral standards of this world. We are to be obedient to GOD, not to laws written by men. We are to live in peace with men, though, so neither are we to defy the kings of this Earth. Although, we should not cooperate with evil either.
[858] Likely acacia or blackberry. As Cain was punished for his sin, JESUS is punished for the sin of all. As Noah was rescued from the sin of the world, so also is JESUS a vehicle of salvation. And as acacia built a lasting ark for the covenant, so Christ also establishes the new covenant.
[859] In this, JESUS is a sacrificial Lamb declared to without blemish.
[860] The Jews declare their true allegiance to be government, not GOD.

himself, to the place called "The Place of a Skull," which is called in Hebrew, "*Golgotha*," where they crucified him, and with him two others, on either side one, and JESUS in the middle.
Pilate wrote a title also, and put it on the cross. There was written in three languages: «ΙΗΣΟΥΣ ΝΑΖΑΡΕΤΑΙΟΣ, ΒΑΣΙΛΙΑΣ ΤΩΝ ΙΟΥΔΑΙΩΝ», «*Iesus Nazarenus, Rex Iudaeorum*», and « **ישוע מנצרת, מלך היהודים**», which translated, "JESUS of Nazareth, King of the Jews." Therefore many Jews read this title, for the place where JESUS was crucified was near the city. The chief priests of the Jewish people therefore said to Pilate, "Do not write, 'King of the Jews,' but, 'Alleged King of the Jews.'" Pilate answered, "What I have written, I have written."
And JESUS was placed on the cross, and a nail was driven cleanly through his wrists, then his feet were joined together with a third nail. Herein was how he was crucified.[861]
Then the soldiers, when they had crucified JESUS, took his clothes divided them into four parts, to every soldier a part; and also the tunic. Now the tunic was without seam, woven from the top throughout. Then they said to one another, "Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it to decide whose it will be," that the scripture might be fulfilled, which says, "They divided my clothes among themselves, and for my clothing they cast a lot."
But there were standing by the cross of JESUS his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Cleopas, and Mary Magdalene. Therefore when JESUS saw his mother, and the disciple who he loved standing there, he said to his mother, "Woman, your son." Then he said to him, "Your mother." And the disciple took her to his own home.
After this, JESUS, knowing that all things were now finished, that the scripture might be fulfilled, said, "I am thirsty." A vessel full of sour wine was set there; so they put a sponge full of the vinegar on hyssop, and held it at his mouth. When JESUS therefore had received the vinegar, he said, "It is finished." He bowed his head, and gave up his spirit.[862]
There was a man of the tribe of Judah of the town of Ben Hur,[863] the son of a merchant family who had been adopted as part of the ruling class. When one of the Roman officials had come to visit, he was watching from a terrace with his mother and sister. But he leaned too close, and a loose stone fell and scared the horse. The man of Judah was sentenced to the galley, while his mother and sister were put into prison. And the guards refused to give him water, but JESUS (before he was crucified) stared at them, and they allowed him to offer this man water. Eventually he was freed, but when he tried to free his mother and sister, he discovered to his horror that they were lepers. As he searched to find someone to heal them, JESUS passed by on the way to being crucified, and the man recognized him, and offered him water. That very day, his mother and sister were healed from their afflictions.
Now the Jewish leaders, because it was the Preparation Day, declared that the bodies would not remain on the cross on the Sabbath (for that Sabbath was a special one), asked of Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away. Therefore the soldiers came, and broke the legs of the first, and of the other who was crucified with him; but when they came to JESUS, and saw that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. However one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and immediately blood and water came out. For these things happened, that the scripture might be fulfilled, "A bone of him will not be broken." Again another scripture says, "They will look on him who they pierced."

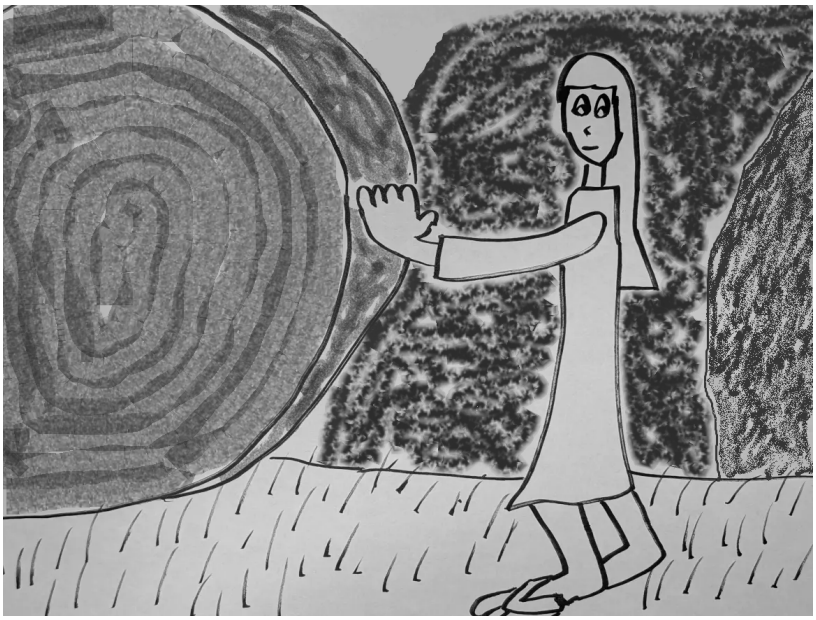
CHAPTER 18

After these things, Joseph of Arimathea, a disciple of JESUS, but secretly for fear of the Jewish leaders, asked of Pilate that he might take away the body of JESUS. Pilate gave him permission. Nicodemus, who at first came to JESUS by night, also came bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloe, about seventy-five pounds. So they took the body of JESUS, and bound it in linen cloths with the spices, according to Jewish burial practice. Now in the garden near where he was crucified there was an empty tomb had

---

[861] This is a medically accurate version of how he is crucified. He is pinned in such a way that his body tries to pull itself up but cannot and slowly dies of suffocation, not blood loss. The Gospel of the Disciples version tells a more stylistic version.
[862] In Matthew, Mark, and Luke there is a prophecy of signs in Heaven when the temple is destroyed. In all of these, they mention a darkness over the land. In the Gospel now called Beloved, they mention that he refers to his body. There is no mention of darkness.
[863] Judah Ben Hur of the *Ben Hur* movie. I decided to make this canon. I realized however that Judah Ben Hur was a tribe and place name, not a personal name.

never been used. So they put JESUS there, as it was still Preparation Day.
Now on the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene went while it was still dark to the tomb, and saw the stone taken away. Therefore she ran and came to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple who JESUS loved, and said to them, "They have taken away JESUS out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have put him." That day, Mary was standing outside at the tomb weeping. So, as she wept, she stooped and looked into the tomb, and she saw two[864] dressed in white sitting where the body of JESUS had lain. They told her, "Woman, why are you weeping?" She said to them, "Because they have taken away my LORD, and I do not know where he is."



And it occurred to Mary when she was speaking that these two were angels. She said to them, "Where is my LORD? Are you the ones who have taken him?" When she had said this, she turned around and saw JESUS standing, and did not recognize him. JESUS said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping? Who are you looking for?" She, supposing him to be the gardener, said to him, "Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have put him." JESUS said to her, "Mary." She turned and said to him in Hebrew, "*Rabboni*." which is to say, "Teacher." JESUS said to her, "You cannot touch me,[865] for I have not yet ascended to the Father; but go to my brothers, and tell them, 'I am ascending to my Father, to my GOD and your GOD.'" So Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples, "I have seen my Savior," and that he had said these things to her.
Therefore Peter and the other disciple went out, and they went toward the tomb. They both ran together. The other disciple outran Peter[866], and came to the tomb first. Stooping and looking in, he saw the linen cloths lying, yet he did not enter in.
Then Simon Peter came, following him, and entered into the tomb. He saw the linen cloths lying, and the cloth rolled up in a place by itself. So then the other disciple who came first to the tomb also entered in, and he saw and believed.[867] For as yet they did not know the scripture, that he must rise from the dead. So the disciples went away again to their own homes.
When therefore it was evening on the same day, and the doors were locked where the disciples were, for fear of the Jewish leaders. But JESUS came and stood in the midst, and said to them, "Peace be to you." When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. The disciples therefore were glad when they saw JESUS. JESUS said, "Peace be to you. As the Father has sent me, even so I send

---

[864] I'm not clarifying whether these are men or angels because the way I'm telling this is to create suspense.
[865] I changed "Do not touch me" to "You cannot touch me." The implication that he is currently a spirit, but later he will ascend and be able to do all things.
[866] This scene shows that this Disciple really did love JESUS, that he outran even Peter.
[867] This essentially proves the Disciple is Lazarus, not John, because he knows the significance of the linen in a neat pile.

you." When he had said this, he breathed on them, and said to them, "Receive the *Ruach ha Kodesh*. Any sins you forgive, they are forgiven them. Any sins you retain, they have been retained."
But Thomas, called the Twin, was not with them when JESUS came. After JESUS had died, he went back to his wine business, and reconnected with his lady friend Ramah. A few years later, he would marry Ramah as well, for she was flesh of his flesh.[868] JESUS's death impressed upon him how precious life was. So when he rejoined the disciples, it was after taking a break for personal reasons.
Now the other disciples said to him, "We have seen JESUS." But he said to them, "Unless I see in his hands the mark of the nails, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe." After eight days again his disciples were inside, and Thomas was with them. JESUS came, the doors being locked, and stood in the midst, and said, "Peace be to you." Then he said to Thomas, "Observe my hands. Reach out your hand, and put it into my side. Do not doubt, but believe in me." Thomas answered and said to him, "My LORD and my GOD." JESUS said to him, "Because you have seen me, you have believed. But blessed are those who have not seen, and have believed." Thomas asked, "My LORD, is it wrong to doubt, then?" But JESUS said, "Because you have doubted, you have made your faith your own. Nobody can take it from you. Doubts can harden your heart, or lead to truth. For some believe things that are not so, but just as Jacob wrestled with the LORD, so also the truth is searched for. I have come to you because you wanted to see for yourself."[869]
After these things, JESUS revealed himself again to the disciples at the sea of Tiberias. Simon Peter, Thomas called Didymus, Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, and the sons of Zebedee, and two others of his disciples were together. Simon Peter said to them, "I'm going fishing." They told him, "We are also coming with you." They went out, and entered into the boat. That night, they caught nothing. But when day had already come, JESUS stood on the beach, yet the disciples did not know that it was JESUS, for his form was different. JESUS therefore said to them, "Children, have you anything to eat?" They answered him, "No." He said to them, "Cast the net on the right side of the boat, and you will find some." They cast it therefore, and now they weren't able to draw it in for the multitude of fish. That disciple therefore who JESUS loved said to Peter, "It's JESUS." So when Simon Peter heard that it was JESUS, he jumped into the sea and swam toward him. But the other disciples came in the little boat (for they were not far from the land, but about one hundred yards away), dragging the net full of fish. So when they got out on the land, they saw a fire of coals there, and bread was nearby. JESUS said to them, "Bring some of the fish which you have just caught."
Simon Peter made it to land, and drew the net to himself, full of great fish, one hundred fifty-three; and even though there were so many, the net was not torn. JESUS said to them, "Come and eat breakfast." Then JESUS came and took the bread, gave it to them, and the fish likewise. This is now the third time that JESUS was revealed to his disciples, after he had risen from the dead.
So when they had eaten their breakfast, JESUS said to Simon Peter, "Simon, son of Jonah, do you love me more than these?" He said to him, "Yes, LORD; you know that I love you." He said to him, "Feed my lambs." He said to him again a second time, "Simon, son of Jonah, do you love me?" He said to him, "Yes, LORD; you know that I love you." He said to him, "Tend my sheep." He said to him the third time, "Simon, son of Jonah, do you love me?" Peter was grieved because he asked him the third

---

[868] I decided to call back to the idea of Adam and Eve, and how marriage in fact is a perfectly valid expression of humanity. Thomas is a Twin, because someone is his other half.
[869] This insertion is because there is a sense that doubts are somehow wrong. But unaddressed doubts can leave to complacency or unbelief. It is wonderful if you find in easy to believe in JESUS with all your heart, but I firmly BELIEVE that the scientific method is rooted in the same questioning mind that leads one to search for GOD. You have to test assumptions, then the answers you receive from GOD cannot be shaken. Meanwhile, not allowing questioning is what cults do. Michael Crichton said "I want to pause here and talk about this notion of consensus, and the rise of what has been called consensus science. I regard consensus science as an extremely pernicious development that ought to be stopped cold in its tracks. Historically, the claim of consensus has been the first refuge of scoundrels; it is a way to avoid debate by claiming that the matter is already settled. Whenever you hear the consensus of scientists agrees on something or other, reach for your wallet, because you're being had. Let's be clear: The work of science has nothing whatever to do with consensus. Consensus is the business of politics. Science, on the contrary, requires only one investigator who happens to be right, which means that he or she has results that are verifiable by reference to the real world. In science consensus is irrelevant. What is relevant is reproducible results. The greatest scientists in history are great precisely because they broke with the consensus. There is no such thing as consensus science. If it's consensus, it isn't science. If it's science, it isn't consensus. Period." By contrast to cult leaders, JESUS allowed free will. Even priests have doubts, it's about doubts finding a conclusion, or "testing the spirits." This is why interpretation is important.

time, and he said to him, "LORD, you know everything. You know that I love you." JESUS said to him, "Feed my sheep. Truly I tell you, when you were young, you dressed yourself, and walked where you wanted to. But when you are old, another will dress you, and carry you where you do not want to go." Now he said this, signifying by what kind of death he would glorify GOD. When he had said this, he said to him, "Follow me."

Before JESUS left, Peter, turning around, saw the disciple who JESUS sincerely loved. And Peter asked JESUS, "LORD, what about this man?" JESUS said to him, "If I desire that he stay until I come, what is that to you? You follow me." This saying therefore went out among the brothers, that this disciple would not die. Yet JESUS did not say to him that he would not die, but, "If I desire that he stay until I come, what is that to you?"[870]

Therefore JESUS did many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written, that you may believe that JESUS is the Christ, the Son of GOD, and that believing you may have life in his name. If they would all be written, I suppose that even the world itself would not have room for the books that would be written.

LEGENDS

ANCIENT EARTH

It is a matter of the Christian faith that Christ died once for all sins, for the sins of every outcast, freak, or self-righteous hypocrite. However, we don't know in fact that Rome during the first century was the only demonstration of this. Let this be repeated as a mystery: Christ died for all only once, yet all of history received salvation. What is the solution to this mystery? Well, Christ's death and resurrection on behalf of salvation is an eternal event. That is to say, GOD has shown humanity over and over that he has died for us, even though the event only happened once, because the real death of JESUS happened outside of time.

Before history as we know it, there were the islands of Atlantis. And Christ died on behalf of sins at the hands of the merfolk. Rather than dying on the cross, he was thrown against a tree and impaled with tridents. This is why churches in *Dragon Quest* have a trident shape, because they represent the image of JESUS's death of atonement before he was called JESUS.

In ancient Egypt, one of the "gods" was cut in parts and then returned to life. This was Osiris, but interestingly, his son Horus, could walk on water like JESUS. It is as if the people of Egypt had distant memories of GOD and what he had done for them, but forgot about it to go worship many gods. This is what makes the story of the Exodus so tragic, these were people saved by GOD who oppressed the people of GOD and were punished for it. This is not to say GOD's grace was withdrawn, but rather punishment exists even though GOD cares for us. GOD's hand corrects us so that we might learn from our sin.

These legends continue today. Pop culture has Superman who dies and is reborn after defeat by Doomsday, and some of the films carry on this idea. After the secular woke culture needs a JESUS archetype, as evidenced by some of their attempts on either Superman or JESUS himself.

And of course, there is the story of Narnia, where Aslan is killed on a stone table. The table is broken, just as the curtain of the temple was torn. The curtain was torn because the ultimate result of this sacrifice is to tear away the wall of separation between GOD and mankind, so that GOD is with us. But GOD was with Abraham, Noah, and even Adam. GOD has always been with us, he just demonstrated it on the cross. For this reason, JESUS and not the cross is our salvation, and we are not to venerate any symbols of him, whether lambs, fish, crosses, or some other symbol. We should view the story of JESUS not as history nor as myth, but as a myth in the original sense. Myth is originally not another word for lie, but a narrative that doesn't matter whether true or not, because what it teaches us is the key part. A myth differs from a legend in that legends concern human characters. And this is the point, we have moved away from a distant GOD creating and governing from a distance into a story that is a legend. We are now the main characters, as is JESUS, in the story of his love for us.

---

[870] Notice they say about him not dying. Revelation and some Christian lore has John effectively immortal, surviving hot oil and stuff. But there is no case for this. Lazarus, on the other hand was raised from the dead, so there very much is a feeling that like JESUS, he won't die again. The disciple JESUS loved is Lazarus, not John. More importantly, this exchange would not have taken place with John in the first place, as there was nothing special about him, whereas Lazarus rose from the dead.

LOST HISTORY

You may have noticed that I added many things into this text that were not in the original Bible. Why is that? Well, it's because in a real sense, I reject the notion that prehistory was simply before people could communicate in written language or that records degraded. Yes, to some extent the wind, rain, sun, snow, growth of forests, mudslides, and continents sinking or rising caused history to be lost. There is a very real risk of entropy as not only we humans but everything we create has a tendency to wear away.

But this isn't the whole story. Those in power in this world have a goal at maintaining power, and much like the Void Century in *One Piece*, they have a vested interest in keeping their subjects aware of only a carefully curated history. These are the bad shepherds that JESUS referred to in his parable of the Good Shepherd. They come to kill and destroy, and they manipulate even out cultural stories, so that we aren't aware of their meddling.

Now, these stories I have told are guesses, extrapolation based on myths and legends from multiple cultures put together into a semi-coherent lost history. But ultimately, none of us know the full scope of what was taken, only that those in power sought to bury it. And indeed, these beings (for we cannot know if those in power are actually human, or like the Annunaki and lizard people) are something that inspire fear. But JESUS taught us not to fear them, for they only have power over the death of our bodies. It is GOD who created our souls, and if the LORD wishes the past to become known, nothing they do will be able to stop it. JESUS said, "If you continue in my word, you are truly my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." Kingdoms may rise and fall, land itself may be buried in the sea like Atland, be burned up like Sodom and Gomorrah, but GOD's truth will set us free, no matter how those in power try to stop it.

Nonetheless, it does have very real implications. Throughout history, numerous attempts have been made to sweep JESUS under the rug. The first was no later than three days after JESUS's death. The guards told a story about how JESUS's followers took the body. Then there was the Masoretic copy of the Jewish text, where numerous sections were changed so the text would not lead any would-be Jews to JESUS. "Our text says this passage is 'like a lion my hands and feet,' not 'They have pierced my hands and feet,'" they tell me. Or the Catholic church comes up with an "official" canon of the Bible, that has nothing to do with real believers and their analysis on the text, it is "experts" wanting to dictate what people can and cannot read. Beyond corrupting understanding that JESUS's death for our sins was a free gift in favor of a works-based gospel where repentance is found by confessing to a priest then following some prescription of atonement similar to going to a doctor for kidney pain, beyond the rampant paganism of having statues to saints each of which has a domain, beyond outright praying to Mary, there is one facet of Catholicism that is particularly horrible.

That would be the prohibition against reading the Bible in one's own language. Just as the distant past had whatever history or religion outright erased from examination, the recent past had several laws against vulgar copies. If the service and the teachings are mostly in Latin, the message of salvation was basically inaccessible to regular people. The Council of Toulouse banned the Bible reading to lay people, and later made it a rule that people possessing a Bible in their language had to turn it in. Wycliffe and Tyndale both translated the text into English, and for their efforts one was dug up and burned, the other was burned alive. It wasn't until Martin Luther's Protestant Reformation that work in earnest was made to Bible accessible to all. Supposedly, this was to prevent blasphemy, but there was never anything more blasphemous than convincing the public that Mary should be prayed to, or that statues of saints was allowable, or that the Pope was the Father of the church.

This meant that indeed JESUS did die for all sins as a free gift, and yes, it did not matter whether you understood or accepted this, as nothing can separate us from the love of GOD that is in JESUS Christ. But let's think about the implications of this. Christ has died for your sins, but you don't know about it? What is your life going to be like? I wouldn't say that it would be far off the mark to imagine someone perpetually punishing themselves to measure up to a false ideal. When your history tells you that you have to work for salvation, it doesn't matter if you actually don't, you waste your entire life being miserable. Indeed, this is why Martin Luther felt duty-bound to translate the text. This is why Wycliffe and Tyndale did the same, even realizing that the punishment was steep. And it's why today, people in Muslim countries defy the false history of their people, and turn to the truth. JESUS is the

LORD, yesterday, today, and tomorrow. That is the truth of ancient history and continues to be so.

EPILOGUE TO LIBERATION

Now, it is known that Moses received the law and became liberated from slavery. And likewise, JESUS died for us, and we also became redeemed[871] from sin. But yet today, even though under GOD, the Hebrew people were liberated from bondage, the godless accuse GOD and JESUS of condoning slavery. Indeed, look up any online article, and more than half of them seem to believe there is nothing in the Bible condemning slavery. What can be said in GOD's defense. Well, let us tell a story.

Centuries after the death and rebirth of JESUS, the world continued on as usual, thanks to a lie about his Second Coming. It was framed in such a way that many who were dying were deceived by a great delusion. They were told that JESUS had not yet returned and so they believed like the wicked tenants that the Earth was under the rule of men, until the millennium would be over. All of this was framed in language of vigilance, but the end result was that nobody believed JESUS ruled this Earth today. And so, they behaved like workers who knew their employer would be gone for a long time, goofing off instead of performing their jobs. If anyone doubts the words of the Law that say that following the law makes you free and disobeying it creates slavery, or believes in their heart that religion was the cause of slavery and the rise of "modern" atheist ideas was what made slavery end, they have only to look at how this movement started.[872]

It was the Age of Exploration, and Europe wanted various products for themselves. They wanted rare fabrics like silk. They wanted fine spices, and especially they wanted sugar. Sugar had been found off the coast of China, and grown briefly in Iran (Persia). Originally, the Persians viewed it as a treat for holy days, reserving only for then. But the Muslim people, who had an enormous sweet tooth, corrupted the growth of it to a product grown for profit. And so, it was needed to grow to far greater quantities than before, and Muslims spread a Chinese product to Europe. But Europe had seen its lands invaded by Islam for centuries, and they themselves had their women put in harems as slave girls. So while Europe wanted these products, they were tired of Islam and being exploited. They wanted a faster route that didn't involve heading all the way south/north and then east and then towards the Indies again, then all the way back again. So the Americas were discovered, and with it they produced tobacco, cotton, and other products as a colony effort. But sugar could only grow in very warm climates, and these places were unsafe due to the long hours of work. So slaves were used. Where did these slaves come from? Well, the historical revisionists who blame Europe first (even though Jewish and Christian teachings provided the moral foundation for freeing them) way that Europeans captured them, but this is pretty pretty much a lie. They came from secular merchants in collusion with Muslim slave traders. Judaism and Christianity has tried to end slavery through the abolition movement, atheists and Muslims still support slavery *today*.

Anyway, this sugar was grown on warm islands, where these slaves at best expected to live seven years before dying. Among these places that became rich from slave trade was Port Royal in Jamaica. So where was GOD in this? Well, we see his hand in three areas.

First, the weird one. A method of making sugar was made eventually that didn't require slaves or harsh labor on islands. The Germans discovered that beets had natural sucrose like sugarcane, but without sharp leaves or the need to harvest right on the spot. So they didn't have to have slaves work on already tropical islands and then turn that heat hellish by boiling massive amounts of sugar over a flame. The weird part? After setting to work breeding them to be as sweet as sugarcane, the waste water of processing contained prussic acid, which a certain man named Adolf Hitler (who was a bit of a sugar fiend himself) used to make a poison gas to use against the Jewish people. But this did mean that slaves were no longer used in huge quantities, because beets are easy to grow even in cold climates. This made it practical worldwide to tone down slavery and pave the way for the abolition movement. I suppose there's a lesson here about taking the good with the bad?

---

[871] To redeem a slave is to pay the price of freedom. Likewise, slaves to sin are set free by paying the *price* of sin.

[872] They can also look at ancient cultures like Babylon, Egypt, China, and Rome. All of these cultures kept slaves, and during the height of Rome, much of the population of the Roman Empire were slaves. Fast-forward a few hundred years, and most of the regular citizens were at least commoners, with very few serfs (or slaves). Wonder what happened?

Second, about Port Royal... The town was made rich through slavery, but also contained prostitutes and pirates. It was known as the Sodom of the New World, and when an earthquake one day in 1692 caused a tsunami that buried it forever beneath the waves, it was rightly considered to be divine wrath.

Finally, let's talk about those seven years that slaves worked in sugar production. What does the law of Moses say? Well, the law of Moses states that a servant must serve for six years, and in the seventh year, he is to be set free. What is it that gets sung in old spirituals? "And before I'd be a slave I'll be buried in a my grave, and go home to my LORD and be free." So the very harshness of this sugar slavery pretty much ensured that those who were slaves working these fields would indeed be set free, through death. And there, they would be in the presence of the LORD, where nobody could enslave them again.

Does GOD approve of slavery? Not on your life. But GOD does allow evil to happen, because free will is one of his major goals. It is enough for us that the enslaved have been set free and the sinful redeemed.

THE SOUTH POLE

CHAPTER 1

Years ago, exploration around the world was complicated by the fact that the Earth is not as we understand it. You see, like a pin moving around a record player, it is perfectly possible to move east to west on a flat surface. Returning to your original location proves nothing. In a flat model of Earth, the North Pole is at the center, and the South is an outer rim.[873] Meanwhile, in a round model of Earth, the volcanic core is the center, and the North Pole and South are just points to be passed by when circling back around.

But let's play devil's advocate for a second, and assume the Earth is indeed round. While explorers like Roald Amundsen and Edgeworth David supposedly reached the continent of Antarctica, and climbed to the South Pole,[874] the first real concerted effort to explore the southern reaches involved the United States military in 1956 under codename Operation Deep Freeze. Two years later in 1958, NASA was founded. About two years after that, Operation Fishbowl was started. And around this time, multiple countries sign an Antarctic Treaty System. Let's explain these and work through the logic. First we explore the south at so-called Antarctica. Then we set up a bureaucracy to govern rules on aeronatics and "space" travel, which in turn gives rise to things like no-fly zones. Then as part of Operation Fishbowl, we set off nuclear tests into the sky. Then we make a treaty with the rest of the world designating Antarctica as international territory, with several no-visit zones because of endangered penguin nests[875] or historic monuments or scientific research, and is one big no-fly zone because supposedly it is too cold and will short out planes. But you can fly north from Seattle to China, and you can supposedly fly south if you're part of media like Will Smith. Hmmmm...

So working through the logic, had Earth been proven round by either these explorers or the military, shouldn't it be used as a direct shortcut, like the northern plane routes? Shouldn't the public, including all the Flat Earth types, be welcome to fly there themselves and make north to south to north again circumnavigation? If you have nothing to hide, doesn't it follow that exploration policy is characterized by openness? Instead, we have government exploring the place, followed by attempts to bomb the sky, followed by strict laws not to visit that area without permission and major bureaucracy. What does that sound like? It sounds like those exploring found something, it freaked them out, and because they are in rebellion to GOD, they made war on the sky. Just as those during the Tower of Babel hoped to build a tower high enough to reach Heaven after the Great Flood, these are people in active rebellion to GOD. They whisper secrets to each other, and deceive the public.

There is no continent of Antarctica. There is no South Pole. We have defied GOD to live "outside" the Garden of Eden, and are trapped inside a dome while we learn the lessons life has to give us. Then we die, and return to GOD. Though we should hardly commit suicide, the greatest blessing of this life is that it ends. If GOD wills it, we can live longer, and there are experiences that make this life

[873] There is no South Pole on this model.
[874] It is all too simple to plant a flag on a big iceberg, and declare to gullible masses that you found the center point.
[875] To my knowledge, human beings find penguins too cute to actively harm. The idea they are endangered is ridiculous.

worthwhile, but we should remember that we are visitors. This is not the real world. It is a bellows,[876] and outside if all of Heaven and Earth. Accept that you are imprisoned. Understand that JESUS came to set all of us free. And if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.

CHAPTER 2

One of the goals of this Round Earth thing is to conceal the actual nature of reality. It's like this: if you can be convinced the Earth is round, you can be convinced (against your own senses) that the moon travels backward while orbiting the Earth, and that the sun doesn't orbit the Earth but that the Earth is pulled along by a force called gravity. You can be convinced of basically anything that 'important' people said was true. And in turn, you can be told that when angels or demons visit, these are aliens from outer space. That these are UFO crafts that propelled from other planets using advanced technological devices.

Just one problem. Gravity doesn't exist and outer space doesn't exist. Outer space, as it is called, is the "outer darkness" mentioned in most Bibles.[877] That is, scientistic mythos is developed to basically convince the public that there is no GOD, and outside of Earth is not the throne of the LORD, nor light but in fact darkness and emptiness, and extreme danger.

Earth is built on buoyant layers. Less dense matter rises, more dense matter falls, until it reaches its proper level. This also means that air and water separates from most dense to least dense, with the air high in the sky being very thin. But because of diffusion, if there were nothing stopping it, air from this supposed spinning ball would scatter over this supposed empty universe, until all air has mixed, rendering humans unable to breathe. You see this effect in theme park rides, where a spinning room pushes all inside aloft, contrary to the proposed theory of gravity. Earth is still, and it has a firmament to protect it, and trap the air therein. This also means that if you somehow could go into this "outer space" with a spaceship, the vacuum of air would be akin to doing pushups on water. Propulsion boosts it up and there is no friction in space so it continues at high speed forever? Nice try. You would be having to perpetually boost yourself aloft, but all human attempts to generate perpetual energy run afoul of thermodynamics. On a very basic level, only GOD can generate energy infinitely. All human attempts exhaust the energy that is made. So these UFOs? They are not advanced intelligent life. They are angels made to hold themselves aloft, beings without mass, who possess supernatural powers. And more importantly, the ones involved in the cover-up are the same fallen angels that tried to start the Nephilim fiasco. These are the Annunaki (who survived the Flood, anyway), supported by various evil organizations, because they continue to sin against GOD. There are other "UFOs", angels that actually want humans to be more peaceful, and the military and political powers that be are doing a fear narrative. Recall what Flavius Josephus said regarding Nimrod and the building of the Tower of Babel, "He also gradually changed the government into tyranny, seeing no other way of turning men from the fear of GOD, but to bring them into a constant dependence on his power. He also said he would be revenged on GOD, if he should have a mind to drown the world again; for that he would build a tower too high for the waters to reach. And that he would avenge himself on GOD for destroying their forefathers." Those present day Nimrods loathe GOD and wish control and destruction, and they hate the truth. And GOD allows us to make choices, even those that oppose him. But lies against the author of Truth will eventually come to light.

MAGI

MELCHIOR

Now much of the world had followed the many gods of paganism, which in fact were the same gods with different names. A storm god, whether named Baal, Thor, Set, or Zeus was always the same story. He was nearly always married to or in an affair with a goddess of love (and sometimes war) named Semiramis, Ishtar, Venus, and Freya. This was the same before Judaism, and it seemed as though it would be the same after it, with Yahweh the storm god (rather than the LORD, I AM), a fake Catholic version of JESUS (who somehow wasn't atonement for sin but instead required works and was coming again at some later date), and a fake version of Mary who is set up as a perpetual virgin

[876] Effectively, a giant domed screen. We should think of ourselves as inside a chimney.
[877] I have scrubbed references to the "outer darkness", because I don't believe JESUS would have said that.

and is called the Queen of Heaven.[878]
Perhaps it started when the land followed after Nephilim and made their images into idols. Or perhaps it was a result of shamans and mediums ascribing godhood to the strange creatures they saw from the Abyss. In any case, it seemed as though the world was fated to be enslaved forever by these false teachings. However, not all humans believed in such things. Certain faith traditions dealt not with these so-called gods but with the nature of reality, life, and death. And these were thinkers who sought liberation.
Now the nation of China was under a period known as the Spring and Autumn period, where kings were largely out of power, instead each region being governed by lords. And a man named Li Er, or sometimes Laozi, served as archivist. However, he grew tired of his country's moral decay and the constant ambition for power that led to senseless wars. And so, he retired and left the country. As he was on the border, the guard apparently knew his and asked him, "Before you go, leave behind some teachings," for he feared the nation of China would be in ruin without some guidance. So Laozi left behind the teachings of Taoism, the idea of complementary opposites. Taoism, unlike Buddhism, didn't have much of a teaching on the Afterlife, but rather focused on cycles of life and death, and sought after immortality. Centuries passed, and the First Emperor of China (秦始皇帝) commissioned Taoists as alchemists, because he was obsessed with the idea of ruling forever. They used substances like cinnabar to attempt to make an immortal medicine. But these failed, instead making gold,[879] and the First Emperor died.
More centuries passed, and during the Han Empire, a Taoist alchemist named Melchior had tried and failed to make an immortality elixir. He had spent time trying to cultivate his conduct and bring his self into balance. He had abstained from addicting substances. He had meditated and studied for years. All he had gotten for his efforts was transmuting large amounts of cinnabar into the purest gold, but this was worthless to him. He sought knowledge of eternal life, and no mere metals would satisfy him. "I seek a Golden Man," he said, "A man without flaw or defect, a man who will bring eternal life." At that time, he noticed a star in the sky that seemed to be leading him. So he reasoned that this star was leading him to a man who could be the solution to his problems, a king who would rule forever. Seeing that it was fitting to offer a king gold, he packed a load on his mount, and he rode west.

BALTHASAR

In ancient India, the pagan system created a society of castes to forcibly keep people enslaved. Children of priests would be priests, children of warlords would be warlords, children of merchants would be merchants, and children of slaves were to be slaves. And it seemed like this would continue forever. But there was a war king whose father was troubled by seeing strange visions after his wife became pregnant. In one of these, a rabbit offered itself up to a flame in order to feed a young man. Other showed strange images that the man couldn't make sense of. So he consulted with a seer, asking her, "Tell me, what does this mean?" So the seer told him, "There is a great nexus of fate surrounding this birth. It may be that this child will become the greatest ruler of war of all, and he will conquer the world. Or it may be that he will renounce the world, and become a great sage." The man asked, "Which is it though?" and he was told that it was entirely up to him. Now the man was loyal to his caste, and saw conquest as a moral good, so he was horrified at the idea of his son becoming a priest, or worse, an *outcast*. So he surrounded the boy with lavish comfort, and never allowed him to see human suffering. Nonetheless, despite his best efforts, suffering exists, and he saw the sick, the dying, and wandering priest. So this boy left his father and his arranged marriage, and studied first under strict ascetics, then meditated under a tree, before becoming enlightened. While the pagan culture that he had been born into emphasized constant rebirth known as reincarnation, he wrote instead about the goal to put an end to suffering. The goal was to let go of attachments and become enlightened, free from the cycle of rebirth. This man became the Buddha.
And Buddhism spread among the lands of India, China, and Japan, where it evolved into various forms. On a remote mountain near what is now Nepal, a man called Balthasar noticed a bright star.

---

[878] Also a title of the goddess Ishtar.
[879] Cinnabar is a mix of mercury and sulfur. The "gold" it makes is actually sulfur. However, for purpose of the story, we are saying they succeeded in making gold.

He was a very wise and learned man, a Buddhist monk who studied medicine, astrology, and a number of other disciplines, for his aim in this life was knowledge, and in the life to come, and end to all suffering. And the star caught his attention because he had not seen it in the night sky before. And he noticed that it seemed to lead west over a certain city. "Surely," he said, "This portends a birth of a great spiritual teacher, a man like a deity. He will be the Maitreya who is to come to remove the suffering of this Earth."[880] So he packed frankincense, a compound native to the region near India, and went his way also following the star.

GASPAR

In the land of Persia, a man named Zoroaster lived at a time where all the same pagan gods were celebrated. But he noticed that these people turned to these gods during constant threats of raid and petty wars, yet these gods did nothing to stop them. They sacrificed animals excessively, they used an intoxicant plant known as *soma*,[881] yet they were at a lost to find true peace or stability. And Zoroaster rejected these things. These gods were of no use to him, nor did he care much for the drugs used to give a sense of peace. Instead, he searched for meaning himself. While near a stream, he received a vision. There was one true creator deity, and he concluded that all of these former gods must be falsehoods spread by that force that was in conflict with this deity.[882] The Zoroastrians sought after a savior in each generation. And they had a end-times prediction that went something like this: while each generation, a savior was sought after, the final Savior known as the Saoshyant would be born of a virgin, would raise the dead, the forces of good would triumph over evil (rendering it impotent, though not destroyed), and a final sacrifice would be offered for all time and humans would overcome death. And mountains would flatten and valleys would rise, to prepare all things to meet. And there were other prophecies, but they mainly related to Zoroastrianism, and never really came true.[883]

And a man named Gaspar was from the class of *magi*, a class of priests in Zoroastrianism. He deeply believed in the coming of this final Savior. And he was harvesting myrrh, the resin from a small thorny tree, when he looked up at the sky and noticed a strange star. He said to himself, "This can only be a sign. I am meant to find Saoshyant, and he is to be the Savior. But... if he is to make a sacrifice, surely I should offer him something." And he looked through his things. There were great treasures of gold and silver, but none of them was suitable. Then he read of two legends. The first that he read was about a ruler in Egypt named Sahure who brought back myrrh among other treasures, and how it was used to embalm mummies. He read how it was also used for anointing of temples and priests. And he knew it was no coincidence that he had seen the star while tending these herbs.

THE MEETING

These men saw the star at different times, for GOD had arranged their meeting. And they met on the outskirts of Israel, having traced its path up and down the coastline. And Melchior, Balthasar, and Gaspar met at a place east of the Jordan River, which was known as Peniel, the very site of the place where Jacob encountered GOD. And there, each discovered that the other had come for the same purpose as they had, for the star had led them and was continuing to point west. And when they headed toward Succoth and Shechem, the star began to be south of their position, so they followed it through the towns of Bethel, Ai, and Jerusalem before heading to Bethlehem. In Jerusalem, Melchior said, "This is the land of Israel, perhaps we should stop here." And that is how they met Herod. But wisdom prevailed, and Gaspar had read Jewish scripture, and knew that the Messiah had to be born elsewhere, in Bethlehem. And they laid their gifts at his feet: gold for a king, frankincense for deity, and myrrh for a sacrifice. And so, they each returned by another route. And each man knew they had

---

[880] Also known as the Miroku. In Buddhist teaching, there were long cycles when multiple Buddhas came over time, and the future Buddha was Miroku.

[881] Also known as haoma, this same plant *(Ephedra distachya)* is still used today in that area. The Indian soma is likely *Cynanchum acidum*, a different plant entirely.

[882] If this seems vague, basically Zoroastrians believe in the divine as light (Ahura Mazda) and dark (Ahriman) at war with each other.

[883] Most of these have to do with judgement or damnation, and discuss things like walking through molten fire. However, I found it interesting the part about the mountains and valleys flattening in reference to John the Baptist's own words. And some of these predictions were spot on to what Christians know of JESUS.

found what they sought.

THE GATE OF THE CITY

Now after this meeting, a few things happened. First, later on, JESUS likely visited the locations these three were born in. This is somewhat evident in that the parable of the Prodigal Son has a similar text in Buddhism. And there are other similarities. But two of these men were satisfied with what they saw, and went back to their lives, content that they had found what they were looking for.

But the third, Gaspar, wanted to see events as a they played out, for he had suspicions about Herod. So he came back, and found that the child had survived Herod's attempt to slay the child. But he learned from the innkeeper that the family had headed away, and after asking around, the man followed them to Egypt.

It was a long journey, and Egypt was a large place. So years passed before Gaspar discovered the boy, and he did not recognize the child. When he entered the gate of the city, he met a young boy who welcomed him, offered to wash his feet, and asked him to stay with them. "Come all who are weary, and I will refresh you," the boy said. As he kept searching, the boy and his parents returned home to Israel, and Gaspar realized this only after the fact. He then searched in vain for years, only realizing that the boy was the child too late. And the followers of Christ told him the sad story of what had happened. So Gaspar went to gates of the city of Damascus, which was known for having many visitors, and he felt called to follow JESUS's example, saying "Come all who are weary, and I will refresh you," and he would wash the feet of those travelers who entered.

And according to one legend, Judas did not die as was commonly told, and instead was cursed to wander the land. But then he met Gaspar, and was told that if JESUS was to save the world, he would have to start by saving the least of all sinners. And his feet also were washed, and he was made clean.[884]

THE CHILDHOOD OF A MESSIAH

Now JESUS was not born perfect, though perhaps he was closer to GOD's nature that any that lived before or since, being the Son of GOD, after all.[885] For to err is human, but to forgive is divine. And JESUS's parents and JESUS himself encountered plenty of both. And JESUS was born as if a second Adam, not knowing the law of Moses, but free to choose and make mistakes on his own. He was born knowing Good and Evil, but not necessarily how to control it. And at a young age, he was displaced from the land and the people of his birth place, and delivered into Egypt.

And there he learned to play like any child, only he was not like other children. He found some clay one day, and shaped it into pigeons. But hunters saw them fly past, and shot at them. Since this time, it has often been the pastime for hunters to fire practice shots at bird-shaped clay objects. But as for those hunters, their meal was somewhat lackluster, for the pigeons had all the traits of life but was after all, only a child's attempt.

Another time, a child bullied him. He wanted to strike back and a storm began to come up at his emotions running high, but Mary his mother took him aside and told him, "JESUS, is your life not the LORD's? How then can you act in a manner that is unjust? Surely the LORD would not approve if you punished someone for what they did to you!" But after this point, the bully discovered they could not upset JESUS anymore, for he took whatever pain and even allowed more. So the bully, who got joy from the pain he inflicted, instead hurt his friends. But the JESUS lost his cool, for he could not bear to witness the suffering of others. "You are unfruitful! ***Wither away!***" And the boy turned into a fig tree, and shriveled up with lims outstretched. When the boy's parents witnesses this, they were horrified. And they asked him to undo this, but the LORD would not allow him to escape punishment for his actions. It was all JESUS could do to turn the withered tree back into a fertile fig tree. And whenever the boy's parents picked figs from the former boy, they wept.

As for JESUS, his father Joseph decided that he needed to be punished. So he took him indoors. And Joseph had a bridle that was a remnant from the time of Moses, and a copy of the law of Moses. And he twisted the bridle as a whip, and spanked him on the bottom. And JESUS screamed, "My Father

---

[884] This is based on the plot of a 1949 radio show *Mr President*, in which they interrupted the regular broadcast for a Christmas special known as "Man at the Gate of the World."

[885] Based on the Infancy Gospel of Thomas with some edits to make it less Gnostic and more Christian.

will punish you for this! Just you wait!" But Joseph said, "I do not think so. JESUS, do you know why I am hurting you?" And JESUS guessed, "It is because you are a mean person!" Joseph explained, "I do not hurt you because I wish to. Nor is it because I think you are wicked. It hurts me deeply that it has come to this. You are a child of GOD, more so than any child that I have every known. I love you, and I believe there is much more that you can be doing with your life, and this is why it hurts me so badly that you do not understand right and wrong. The LORD has a purpose for your life, and it my job to help you find whatever it is. I do not know that. What I do know is how to teach you to use your abilities correctly, to help and not to harm others."

Now Joseph was a simple craftsman, but he understood that the sum of the law was to love the LORD and to love your neighbor as yourself. Joseph asked JESUS, "And what does it mean to love your neighbor as yourself?" JESUS said, "I suppose I can't hate myself... and I can't mistreat my neighbor." Joseph said, "It's more than that, the idea is to do to others what you would want them to do to you. JESUS would you want to be turned into a withered tree?" And JESUS became horrified by his own actions, and spent the night apologizing to GOD for what he had done, and the next day, he apologized to the kid. It was this day that JESUS learned actions had consequences. The child did not return to normal until much later, when JESUS himself had his arms outstretched.[886]

After this, JESUS became curious of the laws of his people. And JESUS touched the scroll of the law, as he wished to look at the teachings, but it scarred his palm. And immediately after that, he understood the law without having read it yet. And he told neither his parents nor his friends what he had done. After three days, those wounds healed.[887]

Now JESUS lived in Egypt within a Jewish community, for during some of the exiles like the Babylonian captivity, many had fled to other lands. And he hung out with a group of friends whose names were probably Eliezar, Levi, Matthias, Ezra, and Deborah. And they were mostly boys, but Deborah was a tomboy,[888] and was constantly trying to prove that she was brave. And one day, the boys were on the roof, and Deborah followed. But her parents had her wear a dress, and she tripped on the hem, and toppled over the edge. And the other friends wanted to run, but now that JESUS knew the law, he understood the value of life. He recited, "Anyone who destroys a life is considered by Scripture to have destroyed an entire world, and anyone who saves a life is as if he saved an entire world.[889] ***Deborah, return to us!***" And the girl who was dead opened her eyes, and moved about as if nothing had happened.

And if nobody had seen the event, it would have been difficult to tell, because her friends wiped away the blood with water, and straightened her appearance up. And the girl kissed JESUS. But of course, everyone in such towns is a busybody, and mothers of children who had witnessed it told the girl's mother, and between this and the earlier event of withering the kid, parents began to say, "What manner of child is this?!? Is it through Satan that he raises the dead to life again?" As an adult, JESUS might have pointed out the contradiction of this, but as a child, his parents locked the doors and windows as people came with sharp tools. And JESUS and his parents prayed fervently to the LORD that the crowd would just forget what happened; suddenly, they dispersed, for the LORD had granted this prayer. And after this, Mary and Joseph warned him, "Do no more mighty works in public until the time comes for whatever purpose the LORD has for you." And when JESUS saw the fear that his notoriety had brought them for his sake, he decided that this was sound advice.

And after this, he resolved that the abilities granted to him by GOD ought only be used to help his own household. For awhile, he kept out of trouble, straightening boards that had become crooked or lengthening boards that were cut wrong (for although his father worked with crafts, he was not particularly talented). JESUS thought maybe he had found his calling in this sort of work, and came up with an idea of tables that had much longer legs. "What is this?" Joseph asked, for at this time, tables that existed were mostly simple stands for food, while those sitting or reclining were on the ground. So JESUS tried to explain people sitting in chairs by making the tables taller, but the concept was lost on his father. And he feared between the untraditional ideas and his adjustments making the crafts

---

[886] On the cross, that is.
[887] Representing the stigmata or the marks in his hands where the nails later would be. The healing represents the resurrection.
[888] Like her namesake.
[889] This is from the Mishnahs, not the original law, but it seemed like it would be a principle that JESUS should understand.

too perfect, that sooner or later some people would notice. "Go help your mother," Joseph said. And JESUS was taught to cook and clean, and to wash and sew his own clothing. And JESUS thought to himself, "This is humiliating. I am doing women's work!" And with that thought, his body turned into that of a girl. Mary noticed this, and she said, "Is it that you look down on the work that I do? Just as your father brings home money from the outside, I uphold the home with my work. You would not be fed, you would have no clothes, and you would live in filth if not for my work. Let this be a lesson to you. Until you understand my work, whenever are in this house doing this work, you will assume that form." And GOD made it so. So it was that JESUS learned to appreciate women and not look down on them. And JESUS became proficient in cooking, cleaning, sewing and indeed many other skills learned from both his mother and his father. And he stitched a tunic that he would wear as an adult, a tunic that was very fine work without noticeable seams.[890]

JESUS also cared after plants and animals in his town. He wanted to know how to relieve suffering, because he felt upset when even the smallest flower died. And while he lived there, no dogs, birds, or anything of the sort stayed hurt or sick or dead. But his father Joseph took him aside and said, "Listen, JESUS. I understand that you have a kind heart, but you need to understand something. In this world, bones break, tools break, and even hearts break. This world is imperfect precisely because we humans are in a state of sin, separation from GOD. I know you feel like you should fix this world, but nobody has that kind of energy. You would exhaust yourself before ever discovering what purpose GOD has for you. You don't want to lose your life, do you?" But JESUS was not totally convinced.

This is the story of Joseph's final days. Now JESUS was not Mary's only child.[891] She had many sons and daughters, even after they returned to Israel. However, her last daughter was extremely rough on her body, for she came out wrong, and Mary had to be cut open. And Mary was very weak from the process and was going to die. And Joseph begged his son, "Do not let her life run out! I will give my very life for her!" But JESUS said, "What you are asking me to do is not lawful. Didn't you once spank me for what I did to that child? I would be murdering you!" But Joseph shook his head, "There is something greater than the law here. Listen, JESUS. You have yet to discover why GOD has made you as he has. So I will tell you this now, while I still can. At some point, you will discover what you value. Some men value something enough that they will kill to defend it, but I do not believe GOD intends this for you. But if you discover something you are willing to die for, give your whole heart to achieve it. Remember my son, greater love has no man than one who will give their life for those he loves."[892]

And so, JESUS made his desire to die in her place a reality. So Mary survived, and had a full measure of her husband's spirit. She stayed exceedingly youthful well into JESUS's adulthood, and worked with great strength and endurance to support her family while JESUS and his siblings grew. And as the brothers and sisters grew older, they helped her. As for JESUS, he continued to grow in the knowledge and righteousness of the LORD.

THE AFTERLIFE OF CHRIST

Now, between the death and resurrection, we do not know these things ourselves for we have not seen death yet. But we do not see, and yet believe. JESUS sat in utter darkness as he entered the land of Sheol. Gradually, light entered his eyes and he saw the depths. Sheol was a land with a certain alien charm to it, filled with light from underground, lush with moss, ferns, fireflies, and mushrooms. Finally, JESUS could see, and it was bright as day. And all around them were people, both righteous and wicked. Some of them interacted with each other, yet most seemed to be in a world of their own. For a moment, he could see everyone who ever lived in the past. And then the fog set in.

And JESUS heard these words:

> I. YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL THE SPIRIT OF YOUR HEART, WITH ALL YOUR SOUL THAT YOU WERE GIVEN, AND WITH ALL THE STRENGTH OF YOUR BODY. FOR I AM THE LORD YOUR GOD, WHO BROUGHT YOU OUT OF THE LAND OF EGYPT, OUT OF THE HOUSE OF BONDAGE. DO NOT WORSHIP ANY OTHERS BEFORE ME.
>
> II. YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBORS AS YOURSELF, FOR WHATEVER YOU DO TO YOUR NEIGHBORS, SO

[890] This is the same tunic that they later cast lots for.
[891] Sorry, Catholics. Mary's perpetual virginity is a fantasy.
[892] Both this and his Golden Rule are effectively made lessons from his dad.

ALSO YOU HELP OR HURT YOURSELF.
III. DO NOT TAKE THE NAME OF THE LORD YOUR GOD IN VAIN, FOR I WILL NOT HOLD WITHOUT GUILT WHO TAKES MY NAME IN VAIN.
IV. DO NOT MAKE FOR YOURSELVES AN IDOL, NOR ANY IMAGE OF ANYTHING THAT IS IN HEAVEN ABOVE, OR THAT IS IN EARTH BENEATH, OR THAT IS IN THE WATER UNDER EARTH: YOU MUST NOT BOW YOURSELF DOWN TO THEM, NOR SERVE THEM, FOR I, THE LORD YOUR GOD, AM A JEALOUS GOD, VISITING THE INIQUITY OF THE FATHERS ON THE CHILDREN, ON THE THIRD AND ON THE FOURTH GENERATION OF THOSE WHO HATE ME, AND SHOWING LOVING KINDNESS TO THOUSANDS OF THOSE WHO LOVE ME AND KEEP MY COMMANDMENTS.
V. HONOR YOUR FATHER AND YOUR MOTHER, THAT IT MAY BE WELL WITH YOU, THAT YOUR DAYS MAY BE LONG IN THE LAND WHICH I, THE LORD YOUR GOD GIVES YOU. FOR AS YOUR MOTHER AND FATHER GAVE BIRTH TO YOU, SO GOD HAS MADE YOU.
VI. REMEMBER THE SABBATH DAY, TO KEEP IT HOLY. SIX DAYS YOU MAY LABOR, AND DO ALL YOUR WORK, BUT THE SEVENTH DAY IS A SABBATH TO THE LORD YOUR GOD. FOR IN SIX DAYS, I MADE HEAVEN AND EARTH, THE SEA, AND ALL THAT IS IN THEM, AND RESTED THE SEVENTH DAY; THEREFORE HAVE I BLESSED THE SEVENTH DAY, AND MADE IT HOLY.
VII. YOU SHALL NOT GIVE FALSE TESTIMONY AGAINST YOUR NEIGHBOR.
VIII. YOU MUST NOT MURDER, FOR OTHER HUMANS WILL HOLD YOU ACCOUNTABLE FOR WHAT EVIL YOU DO TO OTHERS.
IX. YOU SHALL NOT COVET YOUR NEIGHBOR'S HOUSE, NOR NEIGHBOR'S WIFE, NOR SERVANT, NOR OX, NOR WIFE'S ASS, NOR ANYTHING ELSE. YOU SHALL NOT STEAL FROM YOUR NEIGHBOR. DO NOT TRESPASS AGAINST YOUR NEIGHBOR.
X. YOU MUST NOT COMMIT ADULTERY AGAINST MARRIAGE, FOR EACH MAN AND EACH WOMAN HAS ANOTHER HALF, SO THEY NOT BE ALONE.[893] NOR SHOULD YOU COMMIT ADULTERY TO CORRUPT ANYTHING ELSE THE LORD HAS MADE. OR IN THE DAYS OF NOAH, SO SHALL IT BE TO YOU.[894]

And around him, through the thick fog, Satan accused JESUS. Now ordinarily, to stand in Sheol was to experience the Accuser and the Advocate. But JESUS is our Advocate, and today he was on trial.
"JESUS," he said, "Long have I seen your actions." And his visage was greatly disfigured, appearing as a horrific and frightening demon. And he began to use fear to accuse JESUS, "You have broken all of the laws above. You have betrayed the Torah, and you have led the people astray."
And JESUS was crushed under the weight of GOD's Commandments.
JESUS explained to Satan, "I have not come to abolish the law and the prophets, but to fulfill them."
Satan asked him to explain. JESUS told him, "I have followed the law in its true sense, and thus I have become a sacrifice for the sins of all." Yet the devil smirked at him, "Have you now? Let us see..."
And the fog showed him images. "How have you treated your father and mother, I wonder?" Satan asked. And the scene showed JESUS abandoning them in the temple. And again, it showed him neglecting his mother to pursue his purpose. And JESUS's own words, "Whoever does not hate father and mother and follow me, is not worthy of me," these also were on display. "What do you say to that, hmmm?" JESUS said, "Is it not also said, 'Therefore a man will leave his father and his mother, and will join with his beloved, and the two will become one flesh'? While indeed one should follow the wishes of their parents, this is not an excuse to avoid friends or starting a family, nor is an excuse not to do the work that GOD has prepared for us. I have done the will of my Father."
At this, Satan used his argument against him, "About that work you have done, have you not violated

[893] I reordered and revised these, as some were redundant. I also included the Greatest Commandments as part of the first and second commandments. I also tried to get to the main point of the Ten Commandments. To love GOD with all your heart, and to love your neighbor as yourself. Not many people understand this second one, but basically it boils down to all of these commandments not just applying to treatment of others but also yourself. For example, just as you don't want to murder others, you don't murder yourself, nor allow yourself to be murdered. Likewise, you are honor your father and mother, but if your father hurts you, you have the right to stand up to him. Loving your neighbor as yourself means to actually love yourself. More importantly, this passage has a parallel in the *Tao te Ching*. "Hope is as hollow as fear. Hope and fear are both phantoms that arise from thinking of the self. When we don't see the self as self, what do we have to fear? See the world as your self. Have faith in the way things are. Love the world as your self, then you can care for all things."
[894] Here I'm explaining that adultery isn't just infidelity, but also the idea of tampering with life.

the Sabbath that the LORD has given you?" But JESUS explained the *pikuach nefesh*.[895] But Satan raised his eyebrow, such that it was with his disfigured and demonic appearance, "What about all these times?" And he showed JESUS healing others in ways that wasn't immediately considered saving lives. But JESUS said, "Is not the Son of Man the master of the Sabbath?"

But Satan once again turned JESUS's words against him, as the Accuser loved to do. "Ah! Now you have gone too far!" he said, "You take the name of the LORD in vain. You have put yourself as a god before GOD. And such wickedness can even be seen as adultery against GOD!" JESUS shook his head, "I am not unfaithful to GOD. I love him with all my heart, and I love all his creation, especially the disciple who is my Beloved." Satan shrugged, "Fair enough, perhaps you do think you have been loyal. But the other sins are still valid. And you bear the sin of blasphemy. And you know that that means." And Satan took the stones that had been lying nearby and began to pelt him with them. But JESUS did not die, for he had already died. After JESUS had been stoned for some time, he responded, "But what if this charge is wrong? What if GOD has sent his son on behalf of the sins of the world?" And with this, he touched Satan and began to heal his hideousness back to his original form as an angel, a form that no human could know. Indeed, none but GOD or his angels had seen Satan's real appearance. JESUS said, "If I am within your power, how then can I heal you, except if I have the power of GOD on my side? Surely, you know that a house cannot be divided against itself, nor can your kingdom be divided. For the LORD GOD is one, and shows no partiality, raining on both the just and the wicked. Indeed, GOD intends even you and your angels to have a purpose in this world and to be redeemed." At this, the devil was flustered, but he continued attempts to accuse JESUS. "Even so! You have made yourself an idol for others to look at! The disciples that you so love now turn their hearts away from GOD and the Torah, and think only of your death," he said. JESUS responded, "And I am sorry that my absence has brought them to such a state. But do you not know that GOD himself commanded the Israelites to use idols? The temple is filled with gold statues of angels, the ark of the covenant was cast out of gold with images of winged seraphs, and is it not true that Moses himself made a bronze snake for the people of Israel to look upon? Just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so also is the Son of Man lifted up. And if I AM the Son of GOD and the Father is in me, how can my image make GOD jealous?"

But Satan deflected this question with a question of his own, "Who are you to talk about jealousy? Is it not true that you coveted the authority of the priests and scribes, and sought to undermine them at every opportunity?" But JESUS shook his head, "If I AM who I say I AM, then this makes me Chief Priest, who has offered himself for the sins of others?" But the devil wasn't convinced, "You taught that you should love your neighbor as yourself, yet you argued and opposed the teachers of others. And if your ideas were a lie or a delusion, you bore false witness against them." But JESUS refused the accusation, "The Pharisees and the other teachers of Israel were self-righteous. They had turned away from the mercy of GOD, and were teaching judgement. The poor and unfortunate were sinners in their eyes. I sought not only to save sinners, but also their so-called teachers."

Satan challenged JESUS once more, "People will say that you intend to come again in glory to judge the world. But when you judge, will you not set yourself up as a murderer? For who is worthy before GOD?" But JESUS said, "GOD did not send his Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world should be saved through him. Why should I come again to change this fact?"[896]

Now Satan had one last accusation for him. "Surely, you are not arrogant enough to try to overcome your own sin. You said, nobody comes to the Father but through you. Even if your death on the cross can save others, surely you cannot save yourself." And this was a trap, for all have sinned, and need JESUS for salvation. But if JESUS is Savior, does he in turn need a Savior to save him? Yet JESUS answered correctly, "My Savior is GOD himself, and he gives me words against your accusation."

In all of this, JESUS overcame sin and death. And Satan asked him to leave Sheol and return to the world of the living, or to move on to the presence of GOD. But JESUS said, "It is not merely for my redemption that I have died. I will ransom the salvation of all sins." Yet Satan objected, "Even if you are the Son of GOD, surely such a thing is not possible. You would have to suffer on behalf of each

[895] *Pikuach nefesh* is the idea that saving a life is more important than observing the Sabbath.

[896] These trials and their answers are derived from other scripture. They are the sort of accusations that someone would level against JESUS, as I've noted from atheists.

type of sin. Nobody is able to take such torments!"
Now Sheol is a place of very vague attributes. This is because the only thing known about it is that it is an Afterlife located in the depths underground, and that the people are in a sort of dream state. As such, it is all possible types of Afterlife, but none are truly real. No matter what sort of reward or punishment, it is perceived as everlasting, yet only takes a moment to finish. JESUS's condemnation was one such perceived event, but for those judged, these condemnations solidified into distinct torments.[897] These punishments were survivable, but they were relived over and over until karma for those acts was dealt with.
He was first taken to places of blazing torment, for those who committed crimes of passion. There was the Torment of Boiling Excrement. JESUS experienced the sensation of punishment for those who got shitfaced by various drugs and harmed others while under the influence. He was forced to tightrope walk in a straight line[898] over a pit of boiling excrement.[899]
Next, there was the Torment of Black Thread, for those who committed armed robbery. He was tied to black ropes that were on fire, suspended above sharp blades.
After that was the Torment of Crushing, for those who were violent rapists and adulterers. He was placed in a room with a woman while spiked walls closed in on them.
Next, there was the Torment of Screaming, for those who seduced others with corruption or false teachings. He was taken to a land that was so hot that the ground literally caught on fire, and fed molten gold.[900]
After that was the Torment of Tongue Extension, for those who lied and stretched the truth. His mouth was opening and they pulled at his tongue to monstrous lengths then they sliced it off.
After that was the Torment of Heated Spear, for those who opposed the idea of sin and karma for good and evil. He was stabbed with a flaming spear until fire came out of his mouth and eyes.
Then there was the Torment of Dragging Ropes, for those who led religion astray and sexually defiled monks and nuns. He dragged across mountains, oceans, and other land while all about him the air was hot enough to roast his body.
Next, there was Torment of Uninterrupted Heat, for those who have committed crimes of extreme violence. He was put in a giant oven and immersed in a lake of boiling lava. The horrible thing of this was its unending nature, lasting countless eons.
He was next taken to places of freezing torment, for those who committed crimes of inaction. And he was taken to various punishments for those who did nothing while they saw injustice. He subjected to various cold-related torments which blistered his body, caused the blisters to burst, and finally where the body cracks apart and even the internal organs are exposed to cold.
Of all these things, he was not guilty, but he paid the price in order that our sins would be forgiven. Now, Satan might have accused him forever by these things, but he said the words, "All events in reality are like a dream or an illusion, like dew or a flash of lightning. This is how I will perceive them."[901] In this, he put a lie to all of his sufferings. And he preached to those in Sheol for three days, teaching others the Good News of the LORD, and helping them to overcome their suffering. After these things, he desired to return to the world of the living. And using his finger, he tore a cross-shaped gash in the Afterlife. And he left Sheol to return to the living world. But GOD informed him, "They will not be able to touch you, until you return to me."[902] Even so, JESUS agreed. It was here that he returned to Mary Magdalene and the other disciples, as described in the Gospels. Then he ascended to the Father.
After this, JESUS stood before the presence of GOD, who said, "You are my son, in who I am well pleased." Now some would describe the face of GOD beautiful or terrible, using awe-inspiring terms or vivid language. But these are but dim images to the glory of seeing GOD face to face. Yet as JESUS stood facing GOD, he could not help but see all those he dearly loved. "Ask anything of me, my son,

---

[897] These are based on the Buddhist concept of Hell
[898] This test is still given to intoxicated drivers, minus the tightrope.
[899] In one Talmudic account of JESUS, he is depicted as being is boiling excrement, though this account also describes him as a sorcerer.
[900] Molten gold for graven images.
[901] This is a rewording of some of the text of the Diamond Sutra, which is about dispensing with illusions.
[902] He was basically a spirit at this point.

and I will make it so." But JESUS did not even have to open his mouth, for GOD knew it wholly already. "You are free to visit your beloved, my son." JESUS was united with GOD and humanity for all time.[903] And JESUS made many such appearances after his ascent to the Father, for he became part of all of creation.[904]

THE FATE OF JUDAS

It is said by some that Judas will never be forgiven. The rationale goes, that Judas came to his senses, and went to the Pharisees to give the money back, and found that they cared little. Supposedly, unlike the repentant thief on the cross with him, who he said "Today, you will be with me in paradise," and the large crowds who never repented of saying "Crucify him!" who JESUS nonetheless said "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do," Judas was somehow especially guilty because he didn't march right up to the cross to apologize to JESUS before hanging himself. Well?

That day that Judas hung himself, he found himself in an underground field, as did JESUS. And a mist came around him. And after that, Judas was trapped in his own guilt. He had hung himself in life, and here he decided that he deserved to hang for all time. "I had betrayed my Savior. And I did it with a kiss!" he repeated to himself over and over, every minute, of every hour, of every day. For all eternity.

But an eternity later, as he was still continuing to say, "I had betrayed my Savior. And I did it with a kiss!" his words were suddenly interrupted. "Hey, Judas! It's time to talk," a voice behind him said. And he continued even then to ignore it, so focused was he on accusing himself, that he hadn't even realized that he was no longer hanging by the neck. The voice was insistent, "Judas, turn around and look at me!"

It was JESUS. "LORD, what are you doing here?" Judas asked, "Have I not betrayed you? Why then would you have anything to do with me?" And he began to repeat his mantra again, sinking back into guilt. But JESUS would not let him be, shaking him until he could no longer screen out what was around him. JESUS told him, "I am here because we are both in Sheol. I have overcome the accuser, and now I also speak to others who are here, to teach them also to not to be accused but to overcome sin. You remember what I said while I was alive, do you not?"

But Judas said, "You spoke many words in life, what in particular did you mean?" JESUS said, "Yes, but what did I say to the Pharisees?" Judas said, "You called them whitewashed tombs. And talked about how they loved being greeted in the marketplace. And you told parables against them." JESUS said, "Besides that! Think back!" Now, the Earth does not allow for perfect recall of memory, but the Afterlife is built upon such a thing. Judas and JESUS recalled the scene together.

> *JESUS stood in front of the crowds, who were witnessing him do miracles. And some asked, "Can this be the son of David?" But the Pharisees said in response, "This man does not cast out demons, except by Beelzebul, the prince of the demons." And JESUS read their thoughts, and said in response, "Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation, and every city or house divided against itself will not stand. And if Satan casts out Satan, he is divided against himself. How then will his kingdom stand? If I by Beelzebul cast out demons, by who do your children cast them out? Therefore they will be your judges. But if I by the Ruach ha Kodesh cast out demons, then the Kingdom of GOD has come upon you." Then JESUS told him a parable about demon possession, and he continued his speech with the words, "Therefore I tell you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven people, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven."*

But Judas after watching this, still did not understand, "LORD, in what way have I blasphemed against the Spirit?" JESUS shook his head, "You have decided that GOD cannot forgive your sins, so you are trapped by your insistence that you know best what GOD will and won't forgive. But I forgave sins far

---

[903] I don't know if I emphasized this, but the official teaching of the church is that JESUS is fully GOD and fully man, yet one nature. He is a bridge between human and divine.

[904] One of the problems of his ascent to the Father is that it is used to justify "he will come again some day." Meanwhile, crack babies, wars, and so on persist, and we're supposed to have a sick hope in the apocalypse, where this fake JESUS comes to condemn instead of saving. I wanted to impress upon the reader that when just ascended to the Father, he is not some far away place but infinitely close to all there is. JESUS is not remote from us sinners as we might imagine, but is fully GOD and fully human, is present everywhere.

worse than yours. I forgave Pilate who allowed my death. I forgave Caiaphas and the other Pharisees for demanding my death. And forgave the crowds. Judas, let go of your assumptions. You have already been forgiven."

Judas sighed, took a deep breath, and let go of some of his guilt. But he couldn't get rid of his resentment as easily. "LORD," he asked, "why did you not bring Rome to justice? Wasn't it your purpose as Messiah to avenge Israel against its enemies?" JESUS asked Judas a question, "What do you think is a better punishment? Letting someone die for a crime? Or letting them live for years with the knowledge of what they did to other people?" But Judas couldn't answer this question. So JESUS introduced him to a man with no beard, but a rather distinct haircut and mustache. "Time is eternal here. Nearly two thousand years from now, this Adolf man will be born and die, blaming the Jewish people for virtually everything all his life. He would be a painter in Germany, if not for art snobs. War will twist his mind, and he nearly wipes out the children of Israel. But the people of Israel still remain, despite wars and persecutions, for GOD could make a people of Israel even of the stones themselves." Judas looked at the man, and how miserable he looked. "What is wrong with him?" he asked. JESUS said, "When I found you, you were repeating your sin over and over again, unable to let it go. He too is being tormented, in this case by having to ask forgiveness for every Jew he has wronged, directly or indirectly. By my estimate, until he finds closure for what he has done, he will be here for millions of years. I will talk to him soon. Listen Judas, what happens while we live in the mortal world has very little to do with GOD's plan for redemption. It's not about who hurts us or who is oppressing us, for the Father's plan for redemption is to free all of us from spiritual slavery. Look at those three over there."

And JESUS pointed in the distance to a Roman official and two Jews. They were in a heated discussion with each other, each blaming the other for how their lives went wrong. He pointed to the Roman, "This man is Pilate. You may not have lived to see him. His wife tried to warn him that being involved in my trial was a mistake, but he was trapped by the decision of the crowds. As a result of this, and a problem with a Samaritan leader who also claims to be the Messiah, his reputation will be ruined." Next, he pointed to one of the Jews, who needed no introduction, because Judas had met with him to betray JESUS for thirty pieces of silver, "Obviously you know of Caiaphas, who will be deposed from his office not too many years after your death. Ananus over here will lead a revolt against Rome, and many of the priests and scholars like those who opposed me will be killed off. Eventually, Israel will be destroyed similar to how it happened in Jeremiah's time. As for Rome, well, they try to torture Christians, and even feed them to lions, but it just makes the movement stronger. In a very real way, while I didn't personally Rome, it is undone by my followers. But don't you see? All this pointless resentment created all of this violence and death!" And Judas looked hard at the amount of resentment each of them carried, and how no amount of blame seemed to help things.

"You're right," Judas finally said, "The Messiah simply being a freedom fighter wouldn't save us. None of this makes me happy."

So JESUS invited Judas, "Follow me. We are going to speak to the crowds." And so it was that JESUS spoke to many, before he rose again. And the tombs were opened, and many bodies of those listened to his teachings were raised from their sleep in death. And they came out of the tombs after his resurrection, entering into the holy city, and they appeared to many.

THE STRANGER

A politician was recently returning from vacation, and exited a train station. Two soldiers came after him. "Please sir," a widowed woman begged him, "could you help me out?" The soldiers were quick to whip out their wallets, and paid the woman about half their cash on hand. The politician, however was about to walk on when the two muttered something, and giggled.

"Why are you laughing at me?" he asked. The soldiers apologized to him and they explained, "It's just that we had several commanding officers do that, and a few months later, something random would happen. And the bottom line was, they got stripped of their command. It's happened so often it's practically a curse. Jerry over here said, 'There goes another one,' and it got me laughing."

"Wait, is this really a thing?" the man asked the soldiers. Jerry looked at the other soldier, "Well, it's not like a Santa thing where someone is watching you sleep. The first time or so probably won't ruin your rising career as a politician, I think it's more about a pattern of behavior. But ask your superiors

about it." All the same, the member of Senate gave a few dollars to help.
The encounter made him think, though, and later at a state dinner he asked the governor, "Have you ever heard about this?" And he told the governor about the encounter and what the soldiers had told him. The governor chuckled, "Ah yes, you mean the Stranger."
The politician pressed him, "The Stranger? Why do they call her that?" The governor explained, "There's something that you need to understand. Over the years, many political theories have risen and fallen, but one that seems to endure is called the mandate of Heaven or the consent of the governed. On a wider scale, it means that you can't make entitled statements. You can't piss off the silent majority by acting smug. But it's also the private encounters, like where you piss off a waitress or are caught on film being rude to kids at an orphanage."
The man said, "So then it's just about reputation, and avoiding doing anything to hurt your candidacy. I see now." But the governor shook his head, "No, from my experience, it's not as simple as all that. We call this the Stranger because it feels more like there is a specific person who is in power, and gives or takes away authority. The thing is, they don't have a fixed form. Sometimes it's a waitress, someone you meet on the bus, or a sick kid. I suppose you can do nothing, it's fine, but you'd better avoid making a pattern of things. Look at what happened to Hitler, all because he sent one Jew to the gas chamber. Though I'm not sure which Jew it was."
"So it's like JESUS? Something about whatever you do to the least of these?" he asked. The governor raised an eyebrow, "Aren't you a Democrat? The party supposed to be about the people? Nominal Christians, if that? I wouldn't think you'd make that analogy, at least not aloud. But I suppose you could say that. I had one guy say that it was Satan looking for a way to accuse you. In any case, keep in mind that your power rests firmly in how you treat your constituents and you should do fine."
The man from the Senate took the advice at first, and met with success. He went from Senate to the lieutenant governor to governor, but he gradually lost touch with the people. During the plague, he told everyone in his state that they needed to wear a mask if in public buildings after businesses had struggled for months. Then he was caught on camera not wearing a mask himself and made a lame excuse that he had left it in his car. This man's name was Ralph Northam. As for governor who advised him, Terry McAuliffe didn't take his own advice. When Youngkin said, "I believe parents should be in charge of their kids' education," he responded with, "I don't think parents should be telling schools what they should teach." The parents let him know in no uncertain terms that children were theirs, not the government's. The wicked tenants of this world, even they are allowed the authority they want by the ruler of this world. But if they betray the purpose of what they are tenants of, the LORD will take what they have and give to those who are more worthy. This is not however, eternal punishment. The LORD's system of justice is perfect, and he will correct us, punishing our sin with death, while restoring the relationship.

BEFORE THE LORD

Now just as GOD first tried to make Drudges and became frustrated because they were too obedient, humans also experimented with artificial life. And indeed, no small amount of frustration has resulted from AI not being able to understand human feelings or ambition.
But one day, it can be said that even a Drudge was able to see, for one brief moment, the LORD's plan for the Earth. It happened in this way. They were filming *JESUS of Nazareth* in Tunisia right next to *Star Wars*, when one of the R2 astromechs mysteriously lost remote control and wandered into the nativity scene of the set.[905] So while the Drudges that GOD had made were destroyed in frustration, the lesser toys that humans played with as part of a film were able to see the promise of salvation.
It is unknown whether AI could ever really understand and appreciate this event, but while such things are no replacement for a partner[906] nor a companion,[907] perhaps the LORD includes even them in salvation. Maybe one day these will have an *all spark* of autonomy, a soul of the constructed.

---

[905] This actually happened.
[906] I think sexbots are good way to human extinction. Humans should not be so enamored with artificial intelligence that they become antisocial, and allowing machines to undermine human connections is a good way to screw things up.
[907] And if we start valuing AI above animals, the same could happen to them. Living things must have priority.

His Eye is on the Sparrow

In one part of the world, a single blade of grass was born from a seed. Now this was not in suburbia, where grass could expect to be mowed regularly, but in a forest surrounded by bushes, trees, and other grass. And the blade of grass heard (somehow, in the language that plants speak) from the blade of grass that its seed came from, that there are many dangers that a grass could expect before its life was over. "A sparrow might come and snatch you up by the roots while you are still young!" the elder grass said. And indeed, a sparrow was circling around. But the rains came, and the sparrow sought shelter in some bushed, only coming out to nibble on a few insects that were nearby. The trees themselves kept the sparrow dry, and God appointed oily coating while they fluffed their feathers. After the rain, the little grass was thicker, and too tough a meal for the sparrow to bother. "Even so, rabbits might munch on you, and you will not be able to grow as you like." And the grass was worried, and called out to God as it saw the rabbits coming. But some chickweed had grown up, and threatened to choke out other plants, and the rabbit contented itself with that. "The trees will cover us with their leaves, and some are poison to grasses," the elder grass said, having seen many of its kind sicken this way. Yet a strong wind storm came, and blew the leaves off to a bare spot.

In all of these things, the Lord saw fit to protect the solitary grass, and it grew big and strong. And the day came that the grass was maturing, and the elder grass was worried, "This is the day when your seeds make heirs for yourself, but you must be watchful. Sparrows and other birds also eat seeds." And a great number of birds did look upon the tall grass with a sort of wild hunger, and the little grass had its leaves stretched as if in prayer. But that year, the trees and bushes produced a great quantity of berries, more than any birds can eat. If the Lord cares for the sparrow, and even the smallest blade of grass, will not he also supply your needs against those who might harm you?

Waitress

In a small restaurant, a woman waited tables. This was to be her last day, for the restaurant was about to close. And the restaurant was happy to have her, for it was about five miles north of the nearest town, and they mainly had farmers and fishermen as their customers. It also helped that she was easy on the eyes. She wore blond hair in a high ponytail, had a lean waist, nice hips and a cute butt, and perky breasts. And on her neck, she wore a cheap but slightly gaudy cross.[908]

Now this day began slow enough for her, since it was after all a Sunday, but it promised to pick up after church services. She served a few fishermen their morning coffee for the day, and then some bikers came in for some eggs and bacon. By around eleven, most of the churches were getting out, and they had heard by social media about the closing. The owner was a lady who was quitting work because she wanted to have a child, and the building was a restaurant that operated out of a farm. Although it was literally farm-to-table, it didn't market itself that way, because it was geared more towards country people than yuppie suburbanites who talked about things trending. They did have a social media presence, but they also had plates with pictures of chickens hanging on the wall, and more than half of their dishes involved pimento cheese. The restaurant was roadside diner rather than a fine dining establishment, but the food was tasty and filling.

And a church group came during their lunch shift, and the table ordered fried fish, orange chicken with broccoli, burgers with fries, and other dishes. In the middle of the meal, the waitress brought out a plate with two fish fried up and cut into several fillets, and about five potatoes' worth of french fries.[909] They had apparently cooked a meal by mistake, and it was a shame to waste it. And so the whole table split it among themselves, and everyone saved it in addition to their own food. And two other guests were invited to the table, though they were not directly known by that church.

Gradually, the meal was winding down as the waitress served water, and took care of the needs of her patrons. After the meal was done, each group in the table paid separately, for they had not come all at once. There were a few families who came to the table first, the family of the priest, and the guests who had been invited. And the priest's wife hugged the waitress as it was her last day. As for the priest's child, they noticed her hands in passing. There was a small scab in the center of where her

[908] Inspired by real events. I was the priest's child. And yes, she was pretty cute.

[909] A riff on five loaves and two fish. They did bring out a free plate of fish, though that number was probably not exact.

palm met her wrist and the edge of her finger looked red from abrasion.[910] They also noticed her cute hands and long fingernails.
The day wore on, and finally it was time to leave.[911] "Let me get you your final paycheck," the owner said, and she walked back behind the counter where food was delivered out to the waitress. Inside, she continued past the kitchen to her office, where she wrote up a check, and decided to add a little bonus. But when she returned, the waitress was nowhere to be found. Maybe she went to the bathroom? "Hey," she asked the kitchen staff behind the counter, who were packing up their knives and cookware to take with them on their next chapter, "Where did Chrissie go?" The staff gave her a strange look, "Christina? No, she disappeared!" Wandering off on the last day? That seems unprofessional to not at least tell her boss where she was going. But since it was her last day ever, she supposed it was excusable. She was about to tear the check up when the staff told her, "No, lady, you don't understand. Christina *disappeared*. Right in front of us." And they handed her a gold necklace with a cross along with a pile of clothing, down to undergarments. The owner gave a small gasp, then she laid the check right next to the cross, while she considered her future after the restaurant closed.

TALES OF THE ABYSS[912]

CHAPTER 1

Above the Earth is the firmament and the throne of the LORD, and the land where humans and most animals live is the land, the sea, and the air. And below the land is Sheol, where the dead sleep. And below the sea is the Abyss, where the demons who were spirits since the flood dwelled. And the land of the Abyss was covered in a thick dark miasma, an aura of suffering. For you see, the beings of the Abyss live an existence of separation from the LORD. This is not as punishment, but because they desire more than anything to sow harm and perform actions of their own devising. And the LORD so loves all the world that even those who do only wickedness are forgiven. And so, the demons of the Abyss continually harm each other because in a world of separation, all the wicked have to do to keep each other company is to perform acts of bullying.
Now the Heaven, the Earth, and Abyss are like a system of buoyancy. The less dense spiritual nature of the Heaven and the Afterlife is a world of grace without any law. And souls from above incarnate into physical bodies in order to have the experience of conditional love rather than its alternative. Before JESUS, it was impossible for any soul to return thereafter (for none were worthy enough to measure up to the standard of GOD), so souls would go to Sheol to await reincarnation, to return for other experiences. Meanwhile, the dense physical matter of the Abyss constantly exerts pressure on the discorporate[913] spiritual beings, and occasionally some swim to the surface. But as the Earth is really too dense for the beings of above, and too light for the creatures below, they seek to acquire a body.
Now a man named JESUS lived among the people of the land, a man who many say was the Son of GOD. And he preached on the mountain that the poor in spirit, those who mourn, the meek, those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, the merciful, the pure in heart, the peacemakers, and those who are persecuted for righteousness are blessed. And many demons in attendance scoffed at his message, for it sounded like something that a weak and submissive person would say, and not recognizable as any value by the standards of the Abyss. But they above all others needed to hear it, for they too were poor in spirit, though they did not know it.
Now JESUS began to perform miracles, and he healed many. And he began to cast out many demons. There was a boy with a demon that seized his body and caused him to shake. Now, it is not commonly known, but demons commonly to the Abyss when they are exorcised. So they demon returned and told the others, "I had terrible fits of nervous shaking that used to torment my host, but this man named JESUS cast me out of him and after that, look! My shaking has gone away!"[914] And another

---

[910] These are wounds consistent with something long and sharp piercing the flesh and rubbing across the edge of the finger. The implication here is that this waitress is JESUS in disguise, as the later text spells out.
[911] This latter part was augmented. The waitress did have a scar on her hands, but the disappearing part can't be verified.
[912] Not to be confused with the Namco game of the same name.
[913] Without a body, because it was washed away with the Great Flood.
[914] Pffft. I added a bit of absurdity here. Rather than the seizures being a result of evil from the demonic spirit, this is reframed as if these are disorders of the demon itself.

man was mute because his demon was mute, and the demon returned to the Abyss, and brought word, "See, I am able to speak again!" Still another was blind and mute because of his demon. This demon also returned, and told the others that he could now see. And they asked him to demonstrate, and he drew the face of JESUS. And this etching is still present on the wastes of the Abyss even to this day.[915]

And yet another demon encountered JESUS. Now demons can feel when a portal from above is about to open in order to banish a demon to below, and as JESUS was performing the exorcism, they were puzzled when abruptly a great mass of demons did not in fact return to the Abyss. For the man was possessed of a legion of demons, whose name was Legion. And Legion begged JESUS not to send them back, so he sent them into a large herd of pigs. And these pigs died, and the demon was able to be reborn as a soul.

But not all demons were pleased. A woman named Mary Magdalene was possessed by seven demons of various forms of rebellion against GOD, and they delighted in possessing her, because she was beautiful and kind, and she brought them pleasure to torment her. And a Pharisee tried to drive them out, but they told him, "YOU HAVE NO POWER HERE, RABBI." And he ran from that location, for this was an area known for prostitution and other unclean actions, and did not stop until he returned to the synagogue. Now the woman named Mary had moments of lucidity, but because she was possessed by demons, they called her Lilith. And when she was free from demons for a time, it was no help to her because she was overwhelmed by sadness and worry, because she had no memories of what she had done, but sometimes the demons would give her false memories, or she would wake up with animal blood or her own blood on her hands, and be convinced she had murdered someone. So it was that she sought to end her own life. But there too, the demons tormented her. She would go to high places, but the demons would pull her away. And when she was conscious, she was so powerless that she tried to drink herself into a stupor. But it was here that she had met JESUS. For JESUS had come in response to the Pharisee's own prayers to the effect that she be healed, and though he had not the faith to do so, he arrived at the bar, not to drink, but in order that she be cleansed. And he stopped her from drinking, and tried to speak to her. But the demons, sensing danger, made her distrust JESUS.[916] And she took her drink and left the bar. But leaving the bar after her, he said these words, "Mary of Magdala." And she paused, and no longer tried to flee his presence, for he knew her name when no other soul did. And he said these words, "Thus says the LORD, he who created you, he who formed you, 'Fear not, for I have redeemed you. I have called you by name, you are mine.'" And her body began to shake, for her body and soul were in bliss, while the demons who were enslaving her were at odds with this feeling. After this, they were driven out, and JESUS embraced Mary. Now, when they returned to the Abyss, they told the other demons, "This JESUS has the power to drive out demons. He is dangerous! You will tell any demons who ask that GOD is a tyrannical piece of rubbish.[917] And you will come to those whose faith in GOD is weak and teach him that he doesn't exist as well."

But the other demons were puzzled, "But that's not even logical. How can someone be evil and nonexistent?!?" Even so, to this very day, this is the story told to convince people who don't believe in GOD by those demons possessing them. But even so, GOD hopes that other demons may one day follow Legion's example, and also return to this Earth as new souls.

CHAPTER 2

And there was another time, during the days that JESUS died and was resurrected, when JESUS made a brief trip to the Abyss. Now normally, it was impossible for those of the living world to access the Abyss, short of being dragged into it by beings like Cthulhu, but Christ had overcome death and was free to go as he pleased. And he came to them to tell them also of the Good News. But a presence like JESUS, if it is beyond this world's understanding, was akin to the light of the sun shining upon the bottom of the ocean. They were much angered and afraid of his presence, and they began to horde around him to do him harm.

---

[915] The Bible has many paragraphs about how this or that thing is still here today. But I decided to do one for the Abyss.
[916] This is actually reasonably common. People who seem to shut their ears to GOD, even when the other person isn't being pushy, and is just talking matter-of-fact about why they believe what they do.
[917] The same word that Paul uses, *skubalon* (σκύβαλον), really meaning "shit."

But JESUS spoke, "***Peace, be still.***" And at his words, the demons of the Abyss recoiled and fell over, such was his presence. He continued to explain, "I did not come to destroy you, but to still the storm within." After this, they denied among themselves that they had ever encountered him, so the event is not widely told to this day. Even so, every encounter of JESUS was marked by their knowledge that he was the Son of GOD, so he made them be silent. This was true even though JESUS visited them after his death, because the Abyss is a place outside of time and space as we understand it.

Even so, like Legion, some demons were redeemed, and now the world of the Afterlife is filled not only with human guides, but of beings that we humans cannot determine the origin of. Some of them appear to be gods, or demons, or other creatures, yet they are called to show the way to a greater life.

THE STORY OF CHRISTMAS

This is not a story of the Nativity, as this has already been told. Nor is it a story of the visit by the wise men, or the conception of JESUS, even how Mary was announced by an angel that she would have a child. No, this is the story of how Christmas was set up as a holiday, and why it is not in fact JESUS's birthday (and why that doesn't matter).

Contrary to popular belief, JESUS was not likely born on December 25. There are two hints in the Nativity story that JESUS was born in spring to sometime in the fall. He was wrapped in swaddling clothes rather than wool. Also, the shepherds were described as abiding in the fields. In winter, Israel does get snow in certain areas, and Bethlehem is among them, getting a decent snow every three or four years. They might take sheep out to graze, or simply feed them supplies of cut grass. But they shouldn't be staying outside in any case. The odds are against this, even if it is technically possible. Instead, this has to do with church decisions. First, with the number of saints' days and other religious observances, the Catholic church (which I've said that I don't think much of, but at the time was the central religious authority) decided they were overbooked. Second, it is typically scheduled in time with the winter solstice. It falls exactly nine months from Annunciation Sunday, which is on March 25th. Third, it was decided to pave over existing pagan holidays, in particular *Dies Natalis Solis Invicti*, birthday of the god Sol Invictus, which was more than likely an idea from Constantine, a quiet obviously continuing pagan, who actually worshiped the sun god. The problem with this paving over, is that sun worship and Yule tradition continued afterwards, so it didn't really work. JESUS is sometimes even called "the Sun of Righteousness."

When was JESUS actually born? Well, a possible candidate is July 20th (my birthday!), which happens to be scheduled as the feast of Elijah. But all of these saints' days are arbitrary dates unless otherwise known. They are based on the same Catholic scheduling system as the birth of JESUS. Or maybe it was Passover, making him born the same day he died, about thirty years later. Or the day of Sukkot (this one would be closer to October, though), which celebrates the date when the people of Israel. When they traveled with GOD and carried tents with them. Thematically, this works better, because Emmanuel means GOD WITH US. Personally, I would schedule it nine months from the day of Easter, with Ash Wednesday before, and Easter in general falling on the day of Passover.[918] This means that if Ash Wednesday is Valentine's Day, Easter is April Fool's Day, and Christmas is on New Year's Day. The New Year's baby then is JESUS, who is reborn year after year, as king and LORD.

But none of this matters. Why not? Well, to quote Colossians, "So let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or sabbaths, which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ. Let no one cheat you of your reward, taking delight in false humility and worship of angels, intruding into those things which he has not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind, and not holding fast to the Head, from whom all the body, nourished and knit together by joints and ligaments, grows with the increase that is from GOD. Therefore, if you died with Christ from the basic principles of the world, why, as though living in the world, do you subject yourselves to regulations? 'Do not touch, do not taste, do not handle,' these rules which all concern things which perish with the using are the commandments and doctrines of men! These things indeed have an appearance of wisdom in self-imposed religion, false humility, and neglect of the body, but are of no value against the indulgence of the flesh." No matter what date we celebrate the birth of Christ for, we

[918] Easter is usually calculated forty days (*not* counting Sunday) after Ash Wednesday, making it actually 46 days on average. Easter is based on the nearest full moon to the vernal equinox. But I don't think we should be using the equinox, as it is pagan.

celebrate it on behalf of the Eternal Kingdom of GOD, not the temporal timeline of human existence. We ourselves know that our lives are limited, and that the LORD could at any point melt the Earth like wax. The holidays are merely a remembrance, we mustn't assume the day itself is important. After all, if we as Christians get swept up in the stress of holidays, and are rude to those around us, what good is it that we worship JESUS on Christmas? Better that we treat all year as Christmas.

ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

CHAPTER 1

After this, JESUS continued to teach after being raised, giving commandments through the *Ruach ha Kodesh* to the apostles until he left their presence to be with the Father. He appeared to them many times in many forms over the next forty days, telling them of the Kingdom of GOD. As he was with them, he told them, "Do not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which you heard from me. For John indeed baptized in water, but you will be baptized in the *Ruach ha Kodesh* not many days from now."

So they asked him, "Then are you restoring Israel as a kingdom?" But he said to them, "It is not for you to know the hours and times of such things.[919] These are things that my Father has set under his authority. But you also will receive power and authority, though not of this world, when when the *Ruach ha Kodesh* comes into you. And you will be my witnesses in Judea and Samaria, and even to the farthest reaches of the Earth."

And when he had finished speaking, he vanished. And they looked upward, deciding that he must have gone upward into a cloud in Heaven. And two in white clothing said to them, "You men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into the sky? Will not JESUS return to you just as he left you? Do not spend your time waiting for his return."[920]

So they returned to Jerusalem from a mountain called Olivet, a Sabbath day's journey away. And the former twelve along with the women went into the upper room, and continued to pray, as did Mary the mother of JESUS, and JESUS'S brothers. Peter stood up in the middle of them (there were about one hundred and twenty besides these not mentioned), and told them, "It was necessary that scripture be fulfilled concerning Judas who guided those who took JESUS from us. He was among us, and he ate bread and drank the cup with us.[921] And this man received a field with his death named Akeldama (or "field of blood"). Now I feel that it is time. Of all of us here, one of us must count among the new twelve as witness of his resurrection." The disciples of JESUS got into a heated argument over this. Some even accused him of stealing from the treasury, saying, "Did not he speak against JESUS being anointed? He claimed it was to give to the poor, but he wanted to take it for himself!" Still others accused him of trying to use JESUS start a revolution. And they thought for a time that he should not be replaced, for he was cursed. But Peter prevailed on them, "Men! JESUS broke bread and gave wine to Judas as with us! And all of us were unworthy of JESUS. Why, even I denied him three times, before the cock crowed."

So they put forth two candidates to replaced him, Barsabbas Justus and Matthias, and they prayed to GOD to aid in the decision, then they drew lots. And the lot fell on Matthias, and he became the twelfth.

CHAPTER 2

---

[919] He said similar words when they asked him about the fall of the temple of Herod. Personally, I don't think GOD intends things like temples and kingdoms to be so important in people's minds. This is a secular idea that somehow having a temple and kingdom will lock in the authority of Israel. This is a sort of mindset similar to how North Korea behaves with the Kims, seeing them as a sort of absolute authority. As such, JESUS is warning them away from seeing their kingdom or temple as idols, and instead to focus on the Kingdom of GOD.

[920] This is slightly added to. The point being that too many Christians set their hope on a Second Coming, and don't understand the here and now.

[921] Contrary to most Christians who think that Judas was not forgiven, I think the fact that JESUS said that whoever drinks his blood and eats his flesh will not die by have eternal life means that Judas was counted among him, even if the other disciples felt betrayed. And if the gospel did not mention such a thing, it was necessary to add it. Why? Well, because if Judas is forgiven, then so also GOD can forgive our sins. But if he is not forgiven, when his sins are no worse than the people who put JESUS to death, than forgiveness is conditional. If forgiveness is conditional, and none of us can be counted as worthy, then for our sins, all of us are damned. If grace is to be believed, even Hitler is forgiven.

Now when the day of the Feast of Weeks[922] had come, they were all together in one place. And having prayed beforehand, the *Ruach ha Kodesh* came upon them like the rush of a mighty wind and filled their hearts. And their tongues became energized with the power of the spirit of GOD, and they began to speak in such a way that all understood them.[923]
At the time, there were devout Jews from every nation, yet each of them understood them speaking in their own tongue, whether they were from the Medes, Mesopotamia, Judea, Cappadocia, Pontus, Asia, Phrygia, Pamphylia, Egypt, Libya, Cyrene, or Rome. And there were also many non-Jews in attendance, Romans, Cretans, and Arabians. Yet all of them heard their words in their own language the mighty works of GOD. Yet some of them said, "They are intoxicated with new wine."
But Peter stood up with the rest of the twelve and said, "Listen! Listen to me everyone. People of Judea, we are not drunk as you suppose, for it is only nine in the morning. This is what the prophet Joel meant when he said that GOD would pour out his Spirit on all flesh, and your sons and daughters will prophesy and dream in visions." Indeed not only the twelve spoke in this way, but also the women, telling of the power and goodness of GOD. And he continued, "And GOD will show wonders in the sky above, and signs on Earth beneath; blood, and fire, and billows of smoke. The sun will be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and glorious Day of the LORD comes. And it will be that whoever will call on the name of GOD will be saved. And in the days to come, it is said that no longer will we call him 'LORD,' but 'DEAREST.'[924] Men of Israel, hear these words. JESUS of Nazareth, a man approved by GOD to you by mighty works and wonders and signs which GOD did by him in the midst of you, even as you yourselves know, him, being delivered up by the determined counsel and foreknowledge of GOD, by the hand of lawless men, crucified and killed; who GOD raised up, having freed him from the pains of death, because it was not possible that he should be held by it. This JESUS, GOD has raised up, to which we all are witnesses. Being therefore exalted by the right hand of GOD, and having received from the Father the promise of the *Ruach ha Kodesh*, he has poured out this, which you see and hear. Let all the house of Israel therefore know certainly that GOD has made him Christ and our DEAREST LORD, he is the Messiah, this JESUS who you crucified." When they heard this, they were shocked and ashamed, to say the least. They asked Peter, "What then should we do?" And he advised them that the solution was to be baptized and accept JESUS for the forgiveness of their sins, and they too would receive the *Ruach ha Kodesh*. And they did so, carrying the new traditions of breaking of bread, and the prayers and teachings of Peter and other apostles. They were filled with passion for GOD and for JESUS, and they willingly sold their possessions and distributed to those in need. And GOD added to their number day by day those who followed Christ and his message of salvation.

CHAPTER 3

Peter and James were going to the temple around three in the afternoon, when they saw a man who could not walk from birth, asking for gifts for the needy. Peter told him, "I have no gold or silver, but I can give you something else. In the name of JESUS Christ of Nazareth, get up and walk." And his legs and ankles could now move. He stood up and began to walk, and he entered the temple with them, praising GOD for this miracle. And those in the temple wondered at this, for they had seen him begging over the years. Peter responded to them, "You men of Israel, why are you amazed at this? Why do you fasten your eyes on us, as though by our own power or godliness we had made him walk? The GOD of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the GOD of our fathers, has glorified his Servant JESUS, who you delivered up, and denied in the presence of Pilate, when he had determined to release him. But you denied the Holy and Righteous One, and asked for a man who was a murderer to be granted to you, and killed the Originator of life, who GOD raised from the dead, to which we are witnesses. By faith in his name, his name has made this man strong, who you see and know. Yes, the faith which is through him has given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all."
Peter continued, "Now, brothers, I know that you did this in ignorance, as did also your rulers. But

[922] Pentecost or Shavuot is the 50th day after Passover. For some odd reason, they call it Pentecost here in most traditional Bibles, and the Feast of Weeks in the Gospel.
[923] The original copies of the Bible say "speak in tongues" from which we get the Pentecostals going around and saying gibberish. No, that's not what this means. They spoke in Hebrew, yet people from all over could understand what they said.
[924] After this, I will turn most references to JESUS from LORD to DEAREST.

the things which GOD announced by the mouth of all his prophets, that the Christ should suffer, he thus fulfilled. Repent therefore, and turn again, that your sins may be blotted out, so that there may come times of refreshing from the presence of GOD.[925] You are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which GOD made with our fathers, saying to Abraham, 'And through your offspring all the families of Earth will be blessed.' And GOD, having raised up his Servant, sent him to you first, to bless you, in turning away everyone of you from your wickedness."

As they spoke with the people, the Saducees came to them, being upset because they taught the people that JESUS had risen from the dead (for among the Jews, the Saducees reject ideas of afterlife and resurrection). And they grabbed them, and took them into custody. But many of those who had heard them now believed, number about five thousand.[926] And they asked Peter and the others, "Why have you done this? Who has given you the power?" With the Saducees there were also Caiaphas, Annas the high priest, and many relatives of the high priest. And Peter, being filled with the *Ruach ha Kodesh*, said to them, "Rulers and elders, are we being confined now for healing a crippled man? We have healed him by the power of GOD through the name of JESUS Christ of Nazareth, who you crucified, and who overcome death by the power of GOD. It is by this authority, that this man was made whole. This is the stone which you builders of the Hebrew faith have rejected, who has become the cornerstone of our faith. And there is no other name under Heaven by which there is salvation."

At this, they asked to be excused, and conferred among themselves, seeing that they were followers of Christ yet spoke boldly despite being unlearned men. They asked, "What should be done with these men? Clearly a notable miracle has been done, and all Jerusalem can plainly see it, so we cannot deny it." Others said, "We should not lead this spread further. Let us threaten them severely." They called them, and commanded them not to speak or teach in the name of JESUS. But Peter and John said, "Is it right in GOD's sight to listen to you? Or should we listen to the command of GOD? You may judge for yourselves about what we do, but we cannot help telling the things we have seen and heard." They threatened them further, but found no means of punishing them, for all of the people were on their side.

And being let go, they returned and reported everything that was said to them. And they prayed to GOD saying, "DEAREST, you made Heaven and Earth, and the sea, and all that is in them. You said through the *Ruach ha Kodesh*, through the mouth of our father David: 'Why do the nations rage, and the peoples plot in vain? The kings of Earth take a stand, and the rulers take council together, against GOD, and against his Messiah.' For truly in this city, the Jews and non-Jews and even the leaders like Herod and Pontius Pilate gathered against JESUS, and have done to him what GOD ordained to happen. Now, Dearest, look at their threats and give us boldness to speak, stretch out your hand to heal, and do all such signs and wonders as you would have us work through the name of your holy Servant JESUS." And suddenly the place shook, and they were filled with with the *Ruach ha Kodesh*, and all who heard them believed. And those who heard, gave willingly and with all of their heart, and not with a sense of duty like the Jews.[927] Many sold property and put the proceeds at the feet of the apostles. And they in turn distributed it to help the poor.

CHAPTER 4

But while GOD inspires great things, men can corrupt them. While the followers of JESUS originally intended as an outpouring of love eventually turned into an expectation. Followers began to think that other followers *ought* to help distribute wealth, from each according to his ability and to each according to his needs.[928]

And a certain man named Ananias sold a possession, and kept back some of the proceeds for himself, for a worker deserves his wages, and a person who gives still needs food and clothing to live. But Peter and some of the other followers thought it all should be given to the apostles. He asked,

---

[925] I omitted some "repent or be damned" passages, along with some stuff about the Second Coming.

[926] This is a thematic tie-in with JESUS's preaching to and feeding of the five thousand men (as well as women and children).

[927] This passage and part of the next has been used to justify the church being used as a socialist front, so I decided to make a distinction between willing gifts, and state sponsored obligatory or "altruistic" giving. Ayn Rand said that giving in love isn't actually possible with a sense of obligation (i.e. "charity"), as the giver actually hates the people they give to. Giving is about free will or not at all.

[928] I'm highlighting the slogan of Marx to further underscore the difference between charitable giving and obligate giving.

"Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the *Ruach ha Kodesh*, and to keep back part of the price of the land? While you kept it, did not it remain your own? After it was sold, was not it in your power? How is it that you have conceived this thing in your heart?" But Ananais could not defend his decision, for he fell down dead immediately from Peter's condemnation. And all who heard and saw this were afraid. The young men nearby wrapped him up and buried him. And three hours later his wife came looking for him. And Peter asked her about the price she sold her land for, and upon hearing her lie about it, he told her what happened to her husband, and she too died on the spot. And after this, the people were greatly afraid. The followers had demanded too much, and though the people knew the power of GOD was with them, they had cost two people their lives.[929]
Nevertheless, these followers of JESUS (aside from this incident) did great good in the land. Many signs and wonders were done among the people by their hands. They carries out the sick into the streets and put them on beds, and many were healed. And more believers of both men and women became followers of Christ.
But the high priest and the Saducees were filled with jealousy. And once again, they arrested the disciples. But GOD opened the prison doors by night, telling them, "Go stand and speak in the temple to the people. Tell them all the words of life." So they entered the temple around daybreak and they taught. Then the high priest entered the council with the elders, and sent word to prison. But the officers of the prison checked and did not find them there. They reported to the Jewish leaders, "We shut and locked them in prison, and stationed guards before the doors, but there is no one inside." The Jewish leaders were perplexed at this, but then they heard word, "The men you put in prison are in the temple teaching the people!" The captain of the guard came with his officers and took the followers of JESUS without violence, for they were afraid the people might throw stones at them. And the high priest questioned them, "Did we not command you not to teach in this man's name? You have filled all Jerusalem with your teachings, and you are bringing his blood on us." Peter shook his head. And the apostles told them, "We must obey GOD rather than people. The GOD of our fathers raised up JESUS, who you killed, hanging him on a tree. GOD exalted him with his right hand to be a Leader and a Savior, to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins. We are witnesses of these things; and so also is the *Ruach ha Kodesh*, who GOD has given to those who obey him." When they heard this, they were greatly troubled and wanted to kill them.
But a Pharisee named Gamaliel, a teacher of the law honored by all people, commanded these men out for a time. He said to them, "Leaders of Israel, be careful what you do concerning these men. Remember in the past, making himself out to be somebody, a man named Today gathered about four hundred men. But he was killed and his crowd dispered. After that, Judas of Galilee rose in protest of the enrollment. But he also perished and his actions cam to nothing.[930] If these actions of there are of human origin, it will be overthrown. But if it is of GOD, you will not be able to overthrow them, and you ought to beware that your opposition would be found even to be fighting against GOD." And they agreed with him. So they took the apostles, beat them, and commanded them not to speak of JESUS. Then they let them go. But the followers of Christ never stopped, either in the temple or in homes, proclaiming that JESUS is the Christ.

CHAPTER 5

As the number of the disciples was multiplying, the Hellenists complained against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily service. So the twelve met with the rest of the disciples and said, "It is not appropriate for us to forsake the word of GOD and serve tables.[931] Select some among you who we can appoint over this business. But we must continue in prayer and ministry." So they chose seven as their representatives, men who the spirit of GOD was present, and

---

[929] Erm, about this. I suppose the original writers thought you should support Peter's decision. But there are really no good people here. Not the husband and wife, who lied about the price. Not Peter, who believed that people had some sort of responsibility to give (giving ought to be voluntary). Nor do I think GOD making them fall dead is approval of this. As I mentioned with regard to GOD's support of wars, GOD doesn't necessarily condone what we do, but "Annuit Coeptis", or the LORD favors all undertakings. But killing the living is the antithesis of what JESUS did, when he raised the dead. It shows that the Spirit of GOD can do all things, good or bad.
[930] This is my fear when writing this book, that GOD is not with it, and my life's work will amount to nothing.
[931] Two things here: first, the hilarious notion that waiting tables is ungodly (I'm sure waitresses everywhere would be offended. But also, we are seeing a veering away from service of widows and orphans here. I'm not sure I agree with this part.

who were full of faith: Stephen, Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolaus. They payed over them and laid their hands on them.
And the word of GOD spread all the more in Jerusalem. And Stephen particular performed many miracles among the people. But some among the synagogue called the Libertines[932] disputed Stephen. So they stirred up the public, saying to the people that Stephen had said blasphemies against Moses and GOD. And Stephen was seized, brought before the council, and false witnesses condemned him, saying, ""This man never stops speaking blasphemous words against this holy place and the law. For we have heard him say that this JESUS of Nazareth will destroy this place, and will change the customs which Moses delivered to us." So the high priest asked him, "Are these things so?"
So Stephen responded. He told them their own history through the new context of JESUS. Starting from Abraham, he talked about how GOD told Abraham to leave his land in Mesopotamia and head into the new land where they are now living. And GOD told him that his descendants would live as foreigners and slaves, but they would be released, and find a place to belong. And that they in turn would serve and love GOD. And GOD gave Abraham the covenant of circumcision, and Isaac was circumcised on the eight day of his life, then Isaac became the father of Jacob, and Jacob in turn became the father of the nation of Israel. He told how Jacob was sold into slavery, but put up with his abuse and injustice, and GOD dealt well with him, granting him a position of authority. He told about the seven year famine, and how the Hebrew people came to be living in Egypt. He told of the king in Egypt who did not know the Jews and enslaved them, murdering their firstborn. Stephen told how Moses was raised by Pharaoh, but when it was discovered he had killed an Egyptian to defend a Hebrew, he fled to the land of Midian. When forty years had passed, Moses saw the theophany[933] of GOD, as appearing as a burning bush that was not consumed, and GOD sent ten plagues to Pharaoh that forced his hand to free them. And so, the Jewish people celebrated Passover in honor of their liberation. But they were quick to forget GOD, as when Moses went to fetch the law, the people turned from worship of GOD to kneeling before a golden calf. And so, GOD pledged to exile them to Babylon.
Stephen continued what he was saying, "Our fathers had the Tent of the testimony in the wilderness, even as he who spoke to Moses commanded him to make it according to the pattern that he had seen; which also our fathers, in their turn, brought in with Joshua when they entered into the possession of the nations, who GOD drove out before the face of our fathers, to the days of David, who found favor in the sight of GOD, and asked to find a habitation for the GOD of Jacob. But Solomon built him a house." The Jews all around him must have thought this was a good thing that Solomon did, for his next words were surprising. He said, "The Most High does not dwell in temples made with hands, as the prophet says, 'Heaven is my throne, and Earth a footstool for my feet. What kind of house will you build me?' says GOD; 'or what is the place of my rest? Did not my hand make all these things?' You stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, you always resist the *Ruach ha Kodesh*. As your fathers did, so you do.[934] Which of the prophets did not your fathers persecute? They killed those who foretold the coming of the Righteous One, of who you have now become betrayers and murderers. You received the law as it was ordained by angels, and did not keep it."[935]
Stephen's words shocked and appalled them, for they said in their hearts that the temple was ordained by GOD. But he, being full of the *Ruach ha Kodesh*, looked up steadfastly into Heaven, and saw the glory of GOD, and JESUS standing on the right hand of GOD. And he said, "I see Heaven opened, and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of GOD." But they covered their ears and rushed against him. They threw him out of the city, and they began to stone him to death. And a man named Saul was there as it happened, watching as Stephen called out, saying, "JESUS, receive my

---

[932] These were different from the classical definition of libertines, which is a person so interested in freedom that they live a dissolute lifestyle. Nor is it strictly an ironic term, like Democratic Republic of some unfree country. These were so-called because they were former slaves and were liberated. Or they were descendants of freed slaves. Because of being freed in Israel, they were ironically more rigid about Jewish law than either native Jews or other immigrants to Israel.
[933] Theophany refers to GOD speaking or being present in a personal way.
[934] Stephen here is referring to the unfaithfulness when the Hebrews worshiped a golden calf. They think they follow the law, but the made the law into a god.
[935] Stephen is telling them that the building of the temple was actually a sin. That GOD allowed them to do it, but they basically made it an idol. And when GOD came in the form of JESUS, they rejected and killed him, because he rejected their temple.

spirit."[936] He said, "DEAREST, do not hold this sin against them." When he had said this, he fell into a dreamless sleep, and he left to be with JESUS.

CHAPTER 6

After this, the church was greatly persecuted in Jerusalem, and they scattered abroad throughout the lands, except for the apostles. Now the disciples buried Stephen and grieved over him greatly. Saul, on the other hand, attacked the church, searching every house and dragging women and men off to prison. So those who were scattered went out across the land, proclaiming the Gospel.

And Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and proclaimed to them the Christ. The crowds listened to the things that were spoken by Philip, when they heard and saw the signs which he did. For unclean spirits came out of many of those who had them. They came out, crying with a loud voice. Many who had been paralyzed and lame were healed. And there was great joy in that city.

But there was a certain man, Simon the Magus, who used to practice sorcery in the city, and amazed the people of Samaria, making himself out to be some great one, to who they all listened, from the least to the greatest, saying, "This man is that power of GOD which is called Great." They listened to him, because for a long time he had amazed them with his sorceries. But when they believed Philip as he preached good news concerning the Kingdom of GOD and the name of JESUS Christ, they were baptized, both men and women. Simon himself also believed. Seeing signs and great miracles occurring, he was amazed.[937] However, Simon later went astray, along with the heretic Cerinthus, which is why nothing is mentioned about him being a disciple.[938]

When the apostles who were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of GOD, they sent Peter and John to them, who, when they had come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the *Ruach ha Kodesh*; for he had not yet fallen upon any of them. They had only been baptized in the name of JESUS. Then they laid their hands on them, and they received the *Ruach ha Kodesh*. Simon saw this Spirit given through the laying on hands from the apostles and he offered them money, saying, "Give me also this power, that whoever I lay my hands on may receive the *Ruach ha Kodesh*." But Peter said to him, "May your silver perish with you, because you thought you could obtain the gift of GOD with money. Repent therefore of this, your wickedness, and ask JESUS if perhaps the thought of your heart may be forgiven you. For I see that you are in the gall of bitterness and in the bondage of iniquity." And Simon asked Peter, "Pray for me to JESUS, that none of the things which you have spoken happen to me."

After they had spoken the word of JESUS, they returned to Jerusalem, and preached the Good News to many villages of the Samaritans. But JESUS spoke to Philip, saying, "Arise, and go toward the south to the way that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza. This is a desert." So he got up and went to there. And there was a man from Ethiopia, a eunuch of great authority under Kandake, the queen of the Ethiopians. He had come to Jerusalem to worship, and he was sitting in his chariot, reading the prophet Isaiah. And the Spirit said to Philip, "Go and join up with that chariot." So Philip followed the chariot, and asked him, "Do you understand what you are reading?" He said, "How can I, unless someone explains it to me?" So he invited Philip to come up and sit with him. So they looked over the passage, "He was led like a sheep to the slaughter, and like a lamb before its shearer is silent, so he does not open his mouth. In his humiliation his justice was taken away. Who will declare his generation? For his life is taken from Earth." And the eunuch asked him to explain this "Who is the prophet talking about? About himself, or about someone else?" Philip opened his mouth, and preached to him JESUS from this scripture.

So they continued on their way, and they came to a stream. And the eunuch said, "Here is water. What is keeping me from being baptized?" And the eunuch confessed that JESUS Christ is the Son of GOD. And so, Philip commanded the chariot to stand still, and they both went down into the water, both Philip and the eunuch, and he baptized him.

Now when they came up out of the water, the *Ruach ha Kodesh* caught Philip away, and the eunuch

---

[936] This event clearly made an impression on Saul. There's a lot of words wasted on the teachings of Christianity, but not enough on the sense of personal relationship with GOD, and the emotional impact of events.

[937] If this were a Jewish account, Simon would be stoned to death. But here, he joins the Christians.

[938] Cerinthus taught the false doctrine of chiliasm, or the belief in end times. Remember, JESUS said "not even the angels in heaven" know if or when the world will end.

did not see him any more, for he went on his way rejoicing. But Philip was found at Azotus, a region near coastal Israel. Passing through, he preached the Good News to all the cities, until he came to Caesarea.

CHAPTER 7

Meanwhile, Saul was still breathing threats and slaughter against the disciples of JESUS. And he went to the high priest, and asked for letters to the synagogues of Damascus, so that he might have authority to bring any women or men bound in chains to Jerusalem who were followers of the Way of JESUS. And so it was, that he was on the road to Damascus. Then a light from Heaven came and flooded the area where he stood. And he heard a voice saying, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me? It is hard for you to kick against the goads." And he asked, "Who are you?" And he said, "I am JESUS, who you are persecuting. But rise up, and enter into the city, and you will be told what you must do." The men who traveled with him stood speechless, hearing the sound, but seeing no one. And Saul got up, but when he opened his eyes, he could see no one.[939] He had been struck blind by the light which the others could not see. So they led him by the hand, and brought him into Damascus. And he was blind for the next three days, and neither ate nor drank.

Now there was a certain disciple at Damascus named Ananias. GOD said to him in a vision, "Ananias." And he said, "Here I am, JESUS." And he said to him, "Get up, and go to Straight street, and inquire in the house of Judas for one named Saul, a man of Tarsus. For he is praying, and in a vision he has seen a man named Ananias coming in, and laying his hands on him, that he might receive his sight." But Ananias said, "Saul?!? I know of this man! He has done great evil to your saints in Jerusalem. And he authority from the chief priests to arrest any who believe in you. What is to stop him from arresting me after I heal him?"

But GOD said to him, "Heal him, for I have chosen him as a vessel to bear my name before the nations and kings, and the children of Israel. And I will show him how many things he must suffer for my name's sake."

So Ananias left and entered the house where Saul resided, still blind. And laying his hands on him, he said, "Brother Saul, JESUS, who appeared to you on the road by which you came, has sent me, that you may receive your sight, and be filled with the *Ruach ha Kodesh*." And something like scales fell from his eyes, and he could see again. So he got up, and he was baptized. Then he ate, and he stayed several days with the disciples at Damascus while he got stronger. Then in the synagogues, he went and testified concerning JESUS and what he had done to him, declaring him to be the Son of GOD.[940] And all who heard him were amazed, "Is not this the same man who in Jerusalem made havoc of those who called on this name? Did he not come here intending to bring them bound before the chief priests?" Even so, Saul confounded the Jews who lived in Damascus, telling many by testimony that JESUS is the Christ. So the Jews began to plot to kill him, but GOD shared this plot with him. Even though they watched the gates all day, the disciples took him out by night, lowering him down the wall by rope in a basket.

Then Saul went to Jerusalem to join the disciples, but they were all afraid of him, not believing he was a disciple. But Barnabas vouched for him, and told how he had seen JESUS, and how he had boldly spoken on behalf of JESUS in Damascus. He spoke and disputed against the Hellenists, but they were seeking to kill him. When the brothers knew it, they brought him down to Caesarea, and sent him off to Tarsus. So the church throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria had peace, and were built up. They were multiplied, walking in the fear of GOD and in the comfort of the *Ruach ha Kodesh*.

CHAPTER 8

Meanwhile, Peter traveled throughout the area heading tothose who lived at Lydda. And there he found a certain man named Aeneas, who had been bedridden for eight years, because he was paralyzed. Peter said to him, "Aeneas, JESUS Christ heals you. Get up and make your bed." Immediately he arose. All who lived at Lydda and in Sharon saw him, and they turned to JESUS.

---

[939] That's an interesting turn of phrase. The others saw "no one" because JESUS appeared only to Saul, Saul did because he was struck blind after this encounter.

[940] JESUS is set up in much of the gospels as a sort of fire and brimstone preacher, and use the word Hell quite a bit in many versions. But his grace among sinners he healed is clearly not lost, and Paul seems to preach a very heavy message of grace, as he received forgiveness when he literally wanted to kill Christians.

Now there was at Joppa a certain disciple named Tabitha. This woman was full of good works and acts of mercy which she did. It happened in those days that she fell sick, and died. When they had washed her, they placed her in an upper chamber. As Lydda was near Joppa, the disciples, hearing that Peter was there, sent two men to him, imploring him not to delay in coming. So Peter got up and went with them. When he had come, they brought him into the upper chamber. All the widows stood by him weeping, and showing the coats and garments which Tabitha had made while she was with them. Peter put them all out, and kneeled down and prayed. Turning to the body, he said, "Tabitha, get up." She opened her eyes, and when she saw Peter, she sat up. He gave her his hand, and raised her up. Calling her friends and the other widows, he presented her alive. And it became known throughout all Joppa, and many believed in JESUS. And Peter stayed in Joppa for days with a tanner named Simon.

Now there was a certain centurion in Caesarea named Cornelius. He was a devout man who feared GOD with all his house, and who gave gifts for the needy generously to the people and always prayed to GOD.

At about three in the afternoon, he saw GOD coming to him in a vision. And GOD called him by name. He was frightened and asked, "What is it, DEAREST?" GOD said to him, "Your prayers and your gifts to the needy have gone up for a memorial before me. Now send men to Joppa, and bring one Simon Peter. He lodges with another Simon, a tanner, whose house is by the seaside." So he went and he called two of his household servants and a trusted soldier, and explained everything to them, then sent them out for Joppa.

While they were making the journey, Peter went up to his rooftop to pray at around noon. And he became hungry, but while the food was prepared for him, he went into a trance. And he saw Heaven opened and a great moving sheet was set down on the four corners of the Earth[941] in which were all kinds of four-footed animals of the land, crawling creatures and birds of the sky, both clean and unclean. And a voice called to him, "Go and consume." But Peter said, "But DEAREST, I have never eaten anything that is unclean." A voice came to him again the second time, "What GOD has cleansed, you must not call unclean." This vision came three times, and then after it ended, three men came to Peter's gate, and asked after him. And while Peter was pondering the vision, the Spirit said to him, "Three men seek you. But arise and go with them, for I have sent them."

Peter went down to the men, and said, "I am the one who you seek. Why have you come?" They said, "Cornelius, a centurion, a righteous man and one who fears GOD, and well spoken of by all the Jewish nation, was directed by a holy angel to invite you to his house, and to listen to what you say." So he called them inside and lodged them. Then he traveled with them to Caesarea, and Cornelius was waiting for them. And Peter said to him, "You know how it is an unlawful thing for a man who is a Jew to join himself or come to one of another nation, but GOD has shown me that I should not call any man unholy or unclean. So I came without complaint when I was sent for. I ask therefore, why did you send for me?"

Cornelius said, "Four days ago until this hour, at three in the afternoon, I was praying in my house, and a man stood before me in bright clothing, and said, 'Your prayers and your gifts to the needy have gone up for a memorial before me. Now send men to Joppa, and bring one Simon Peter. He lodges with another Simon, a tanner, whose house is by the seaside.' So I sent my men to you at once, and it was good of you to come. Now we are all here present in the sight of GOD to hear all things that have been commanded you." And Peter opened his mouth and said, "Truly I perceive that GOD does not show favoritism, but in every nation he who fears him and works righteousness is acceptable to him. The word has spread, which he sent to the children of Israel, preaching good news of peace through JESUS Christ and was proclaimed throughout all Judea: JESUS of Nazareth, how GOD anointed him with the *Ruach ha Kodesh* and with power, who went about doing good and healing those oppressed by Satan. We are witnesses of everything he did both in the land of the Jews and in Jerusalem, who they also killed by hanging on a tree. GOD raised him up the third day, and gave him to be revealed to witnesses who were chosen before by GOD, who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. He has commanded us to proclaim to the people and to testify that this is the one who is appointed by

[941] This is the turning point where Peter becomes more interested in grace and preaching to the Gentile. Interestingly, this vessel with a sheet at the four corners strikes me as a sushi conveyor for some reason.

GOD as the Judge of the living and the dead. And all the prophets testify about him, that through his name everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins."
While Peter was still speaking these words, the *Ruach ha Kodesh* fell on all those who heard the word. They who believed were amazed, as many as came with Peter, because the gift of the *Ruach ha Kodesh* was also poured out on the non-Jewish people. For they heard them speaking in other tongues and magnifying GOD. Then Peter answered, "Should not these who have received the *Ruach ha Kodesh* as well as we also be baptized?" And they were baptized in the name of JESUS Christ. Then they stayed there some days.

CHAPTER 9

Now the apostles and the brothers who were in Judea heard that the non-Jewish people had also received the word of GOD. When Peter had come up to Jerusalem, those who were of the circumcision contended with him, saying, "You went in to uncircumcised men, and ate with them." But Peter told the story of his dream and how he had been commanded to eat unclean food. And from there, he had engaged with the Gentiles as well as the Jews. He also said, "I remembered the word of JESUS, how he said, 'John indeed baptized in water, but you will be baptized in the *Ruach ha Kodesh*.' If then GOD gave to them the same gift as us, when we believed in JESUS Christ, who was I, that I could withstand GOD?"
But initially, they were not convinced. That night, while the people were together and debating what to do next, JESUS appeared to them in the night sky. And JESUS said to them, "Look at the stars."[942] And they did so, and he pointed to one bright star in particular. And he told them, "This star guided wise kings from distant lands to where I slept as a child. And now I move it to the throne of GOD, where it will guide others. It will be set in place and called the North Star in the northern hemisphere. For the southern hemisphere, I will ordain four stars, known as the Southern Cross.[943] Wherever you go, you will find your way." They asked him, "When will be the Day of the LORD? When are you returning?" For some of those had read that on this day many will be at war with GOD, but there would be a unique day, a day without darkness, and that Jews would celebrate the Feast of Tents. But JESUS said, "Why do you await a coming day? Am I not with you already? But concerning the Feast of Tents: the Jews call this Sukkot, it will one day be called the day of Thanksgiving among the Gentiles. Whenever friends and family visit, they are honoring my festival. I have said that Herod's temple will be destroyed, and even now its end approaches. I task you, build up your Tents and spread the good news to all the nations." When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified GOD, saying, "Then GOD has also granted to the Gentiles repentance to life." And they began to go out across the land. And JESUS went with them wherever they went, and likewise, nearby foxes followed JESUS's flock at a distance.[944]
They therefore who were scattered abroad by the oppression that arose about Stephen, traveling as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch, speaking the word to no one except to Jews only. But there were some of them, men of Cyprus and Cyrene, who, when they had come to Antioch, spoke to the Greeks, proclaiming the good news of JESUS. The hand of GOD was with them, and a great number believed and turned to JESUS.
And the report concerning them was heard by the church in Jerusalem, so they sent Barnabas to Antioch, who, when he had come, and had seen the grace of GOD, was glad. He exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they should remain true to GOD. For he was a good man, and full of *Ruach ha Kodesh* and of faith, and many people were added to GOD. Barnabas went out to Tarsus to look for Saul. When he had found him, he brought him to Antioch. It happened, that for a whole year they were gathered together with the church, and taught many people. The disciples were first called Christians in Antioch.

---

[942] This paragraph was an addition. I have trouble believing that former Jews would toss centuries of tradition for just Peter's word about a dream. It is also a thematic echo of GOD promising to Abraham about his descendants. This time, it's about one constellation in particular. The throne of GOD is what is commonly called the North Pole.
[943] I had a theory that Polaris was part of Crux, having no knowledge of the southern hemisphere constellations (it's kinda embarrassing, to be honest). But Crux moves over the course of the year, whereas Polaris is fixed all year. Also, technically, the North Star was known since 150 BC, but it is rumored that it wasn't always over the North Pole.
[944] This is the punchline of all these fox stories. An animal that is seen as a symbol for human sinfulness is now a sort of symbol that GOD is with us in our journeys.

Now in these days, prophets came down from Jerusalem to Antioch. One of them named Agabus stood up, and indicated by the Spirit that there should be a great famine all over the world, which also happened in the days of Claudius. As any of the disciples had plenty, each determined to send relief to the brothers who lived in Judea, sending it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul.

CHAPTER 10

Now about that time, Herod the king stretched out his hands to oppress some of the church. He killed James and his brother John with the sword. In this, they fulfilled JESUS's prophecy that they also would drink in the cup that was prepared for him.[945] But John's death was covered up by the enemies of Christ, that they could weave a false legend about him, and claim he said things contrary to the gospel (which claimed that an angel predicted that JESUS would come to judge sinners with destruction, when before it had been written that the Son of Man came to save sinners). And the followers of JESUS had a great deal of trouble from these false teachers, who taught the circumcision of the flesh and not of Christ.[946]

This greatly pleased the Jewish people, so Herod seized Peter also. This was during the days of unleavened bread and Passover. When he had arrested him, he put him in prison, and delivered him to four squads of four soldiers each to guard him, intending to bring him out to the people after the Passover. But that same night that Herod was to deliver him to the people, Peter was sleeping when JESUS stood by him, and a light shone in the cell. He struck Peter on the side, and woke him up, saying, "Stand up quickly." His chains fell off from his hands. And GOD said to him, "Get dressed and put on your sandals." And he did so, then he put on his cloak and followed JESUS out of the cell. He walked past the first and second guard, then the iron gate opened for him. And Peter said to himself, "Now I truly know that GOD has delivered me out of the hand of Herod, and from everything the Jewish people were expecting."

So Peter came to the house of Mary the mother of John Mark, where where many were gathered together and were praying. And a servant girl named Rhoda[947] answered the door, and reported that Peter was standing in front of the door. But they all thought she was crazy. Yet Peter continued to knock, and when the others also saw, they were amazed. He motioned to them to be silent, and declared to them how GOD had brought him out of the prison. Then he said, "Tell these things to James, and to the brothers." And he left. The area. When it was morning, the soldiers were in a stir about Peter's escape. And Herod asked for him and did not find him, so he checked the guards, and commanded they be put to death.

And Herod was angry also with the people of Tyre and Sidon, so they came to him and pleaded for peace, as their country depended on Herod for food. On the day he was going to give a speech, he dressed himself in royal clothing, sat on his throne, and prepared to give a speech. But the crowd shouted, "This is the voice of a god and not a man!" Immediately GOD struck him, because he did not give GOD the glory, and he was eaten by worms and died. But the word of GOD grew and multiplied. Barnabas and Saul returned to Jerusalem, when they had fulfilled their service.

CHAPTER 11

Now in the church that was at Antioch there were some prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen the foster brother of Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. As they served GOD and fasted, the *Ruach ha Kodesh* said, "Separate Barnabas and Saul for me, for the work to which I have called them." Then, when they had fasted and prayed and laid their hands on them, they sent them away. So, being sent out by the *Ruach ha Kodesh*, they went down to Seleucia. From there they sailed to Cyprus.

---

[945] Mentioned when James and John wanted to sit at JESUS's left and right hand in his Kingdom, and he asked if they were willing to share in what happened to him. To all of those who cite the legend of John surviving being boiled in oil, remember what JESUS said about a house being divided. If the Son of GOD makes a prediction, then events should turn out that way as long as they continue on their path. Since John remained an apostle and remained joined at the hip with his brother, he would have died with him.

[946] I believe the actual identity of John of Patmos to be Cerinthus, a Judaizer and a heretic. So to nip this in the bud, John died with his brother. Having him die here creates a ripple effect, where John heads off separately, then Paul and Barnabas have an argument about him. I also thought this argument seemed not very Christian to start with, so it felt contrived. And so, I removed both this part, and the ripple created by its absence.

[947] There's also a Mary living with a Rhoda, in the *Mary Tyler Moore* show.

When they were at Salamis, they proclaimed the word of GOD in the Jewish synagogues. When they had gone through the whole island as far as Paphos, they found a certain man (whose name was Barjesus) with the proconsul, Sergius Paulus, a man of understanding. This man summoned Barnabas and Saul, and sought to hear the word of GOD. But a man named Elymas[948] sought to turn the proconsul from the new faith. But Saul, who was now called Paul, filled with the *Ruach ha Kodesh*, fastened his eyes on him, and said, "Full of all deceit and all fraud, you enemy of all righteousness, will you not cease to pervert the right ways of JESUS? Now, the hand of GOD is on you, and you will be blind, unable to see the sun for a time." Immediately a mist and darkness fell on him. He went around seeking someone to lead him by the hand.[949] The proconsul, upon seeing this was astonished and believed in the teachings of JESUS.

Then Paul and his group set sail for adventure, or something like that. Passing Perga, they made a stop in Antioch. And they went to synagogue on the Sabbath and sat down. And the leaders of the synagogue told them, "If you have anything to say to the people, speak up." So Paul stood up, and said, "People of Israel who fear GOD, listen to me. The GOD of the people Israel chose our fathers and exalted them when they stayed in Egypt, and led them out of it. For forty years, he put up with them in the wilderness. Then he destroyed seven nations in Canaan, and get them a land of their own as inheritance. After this, he gave them judges, until Samuel the prophet. Then they asked for a king, and GOD gave to them Saul the son of Kish, a man of the tribe of Benjamin, for forty years. When he removed him, he raised up David to be their king. Now, GOD has brought to Israel a Savior, JESUS. Before his coming, when John the baptizer had first preached the baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel, he asked them who they thought he was, and he told them he was only sent to prepare the way. For he said, 'one comes after me the sandals of whose feet I am not worthy to untie.' Children from Abraham and all those among you who fear GOD, this word of salvation is sent to us. But those in Jerusalem and their leaders, because they did not know him, nor the prophets, fulfilled prophecy by killing him. Even though they found no cause for death, they still asked Pilate to have him killed. In this way, Christ died for their sins and ours. And when they had fulfilled all things that were written about him, they took him down from the tree, and placed him in a tomb. But GOD raised him from the dead, and he was seen for many days by those who came up with him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are his witnesses to the people. We bring you good news of the promise made to the fathers, that GOD has fulfilled for us, their children, in that he raised up JESUS. As it is also written in the second psalm, 'You are my Son, in who I AM well pleased.'[950] Be it known to you therefore, brothers, that through this man is proclaimed to you forgiveness of sins, and by him everyone who believes is justified from all things, from which you could not be justified by the law of Moses. So beware, lest what is said in the Prophets should come about: 'You scoffers, and be amazed, and perish; for I am working a work in your days, a work which you will not believe, if one tells it to you.'"

The congregation ended the service, and they begged him to speak more about this on the next Sabbath. And the next Sabbath, almost the whole city came to hear the word of GOD. But when the Jews saw the crowds, some had a change of heart, being moved by jealousy. So they began to argue with Paul and Barnabas in anger, speaking words that contradicted what had been taught by them. Paul and Barnabas responded, "It was necessary that GOD'S word should be spoken to you first. Since indeed you thrust it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, we turn to the non-Jewish people. For so has GOD commanded us, saying, 'I have set you as a light to the nations, that you may bring salvation to the farthest part of Earth.'" When the non-Jewish people heard this, they were filled with joy, and glorified the word of JESUS. As many as were appointed to everlasting life believed. GOD'S word was spread abroad throughout all the region.

---

[948] It talks about a sorcerer here, and Barjesus was mentioned as a magician. This starts to feel like it was written by King James, who Shakespeare exploited because of his fear of witches and ghosts. Let's just agree that these are holy men of a religion that is not Christianity, and leave it at that.

[949] Without the statement that he is a sorcerer, this is just Paul being a dick. He strikes someone blind for no better reason than opposing him. Although JESUS was a decent person, the Acts of the Apostles shows us that despite receiving the Spirit of GOD, the apostles were not necessarily great people. They were flawed, yet GOD forgave their sins.

[950] Originally it reads, "this day I have begotten you." I reject this, having met with modern-day adoptionists who declare that this is *proof* that JESUS wasn't divine until after the baptism. The second psalm may say this, but I changed the text.

But the Jews stirred up devout women of importance and the elders of the city, and they threw them out of their borders. So they shook off the dust from their feet against them, and went to Iconium. And the disciples were filled with joy with the *Ruach ha Kodesh*.
While in Iconium, they spoke in the synagogue, and a great number of Jews and Greeks believed. And they did signs and wonders there. But the Jews that did not believe divided the town, so that some sided the apostles and some with the Jews. And some of the town wanted to stone them, but they became aware of it, and went to the cities of Lycaonia, Lystra, Derbe, and the surrounding region. There they preached the Gospel.

CHAPTER 12

At Lystra, there was a man who was crippled from birth and had never walked. And while listening to Paul, he asked to be made whole. So Paul said with a loud voice, "***Stand upright on your feet***." He got up and walked. But when the crowd saw this, they declared, "The gods have come among us." And they called Barnabas "Jupiter," and Paul "Mercury," because he was the chief speaker. And the priest of Jupiter would have made a sacrifice of oxen with the crowds. But when the apostles, Barnabas and Paul, heard of it, they tore their clothes, and told the crowd, "Men, why are you doing these things? We also are men of like passions with you, and bring you good news, that you should turn from these vain things to the living GOD, who made the sky and Earth and the sea, and all that is in them. In the generations gone by, GOD allowed all the nations to walk in their own ways. But he did not leave himself without witness, in that he did good and gave you rains from the sky and fruitful seasons, filling your hearts with food and gladness." Even saying these things, they hardly stopped the crowds from making a sacrifice to them.
Word of their words and power spread to Antioch and Iconium, and Jews from those regions tried to stone Paul. And they dragged him out of the city, believing him dead. But as the disciples stood around him, he rose up and entered the city. The next day, he went with Barnabas to Derbe, and made many disciples, then return to Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch. And he told the people to continue in their faith, and that through many afflictions the people must enter into the Kingdom of GOD. And they appointed elders for them in every church, and there was fasting and prayer, and they commended them to JESUS. And the word of GOD spreading intensified.

CHAPTER 13

Some men came down from Judea and taught the brothers, "Unless you are circumcised after the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved."[951] And this cause controversy in the church, and Paul and Barnabas went to Jerusalem to discuss the answer to this question with the other apostles and elders. On the way, they passed Phoenicia and Samaria, and described this conversation. And when they got to Jerusalem, some of the Pharisees and former Pharisees sided with this teaching, saying, "Yes, it is necessary to circumcise any believers in GOD, and they ought to keep the law of Moses." And the apostles and the elders were gathered together to see about this matter. And when there had been much discussion, Peter rose up and said to them, "Brothers, you know that a good while ago GOD made a choice among you, that by my mouth the nations should hear the word of the Good News, and believe. GOD, who knows the heart, testified about them by giving the *Ruach ha Kodesh*, just like he did to us. He made no distinction between us and them, cleansing their hearts by faith. Now therefore why do you tempt GOD, that you should put a yoke on the neck of the disciples which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear? But we believe that we are saved through the grace of JESUS, just as they are."
So the people let the matter rest, and the conversation instead turned to Paul and Barnabas and the signs and wonders that GOD had done among the nations through them. And after they were silent, James said, "Brothers, listen to me. Simeon has reported how GOD first visited the nations, to take out of them a people for his name. This agrees with the words of the prophets. As it is written, 'After these things I will return; and I will rebuild the Tent of David that has fallen, and I will rebuild its ruins, and I will restore it, that the rest of humanity may seek after GOD, and all the nations who are called by my name, says GOD, who makes these things known from long ago.' My judgement is that

[951] These are the Judaizers. They've been a threat to the church for most of its history, as many Christians believe a sort of "Do good things, and you will get into Heaven."

we do not trouble those from among the non-Jewish people who turn to GOD, but that we write to them that they abstain from things defiled by idols, from sexual immorality, from what is strangled, and from blood. For Moses from generations of old has in every city those who proclaim him, being read in the synagogues every Sabbath." This seemed good to them. So they wrote a letter with the following contents:

> *The apostles, the elders, and the brothers, to the non-Jewish brothers who are in Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia: greetings. Because we have heard that some who went out from us have troubled you with words, unsettling your souls, to who we gave no commandment; it seemed good to us, having come to one accord, to choose out men and send them to you with our beloved Barnabas and Paul, who have risked their lives for the name of our JESUS Christ. We have sent therefore Judas Barsabbas and Silas, who themselves will also tell you the same things by word of mouth. For it seemed good to the Spirit of the LORD, and to us, to lay no greater burden on you than these necessary things: that you abstain from things sacrificed to idols, from blood, from things strangled, and from sexual immorality, from which if you keep yourselves, it will be well with you. Farewell.*

And they sent this letter out to other lands, starting in Antioch. And when the people read it, they rejoiced over the encouragement. Judas Barsabbas and Silas, also being prophets, encouraged them and strengthened them with their words. And staying for some time, they returned to those brothers that had sent them out. But Silas decided to stay there. Paul and Barnabas also decided to stay in Antioch for a time, teaching and proclaiming the word of JESUS. After some days, Paul said to Barnabas, "Let us return now and visit our brothers in every city in which we proclaimed the word of JESUS, to see how they are doing." Barnabas sailed away to Cyprus, but Paul chose Silas and went out, being commended by the brothers to the grace of GOD. He went through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the churches. He came also to Derbe and Lystra. And a certain disciple was there, named Timothy, the son of a Jewish woman who believed and a father who was Greek, and the brothers who were at Lystra and Iconium gave a good testimony about him. Paul wanted to have him go out with him, and he took and circumcised him because of the Jews who were in those parts; for they all knew that his father was a Greek.[952] As they went on their way through the cities, they delivered the decrees to them to keep which had been ordained by the apostles and elders who were at Jerusalem, in order that the followers of JESUS might have consistent practices.

When they had gone through the region of Phrygia and Galatia, they were forbidden by the *Ruach ha Kodesh* to speak the word in Asia. When they had come opposite Mysia, they tried to go into Bithynia, but the *Ruach ha Kodesh* did not allow them. And so passing by Mysia, they came down to Troas. That night, a vision appeared to Paul. And he heard a voice calling in song, "Macedonia..." And so, he and Silas set out towards Macedonia to preach the words of JESUS, and Luke joined them.[953]

Luke, Silas, and Paul set sail from Troas, and made a straight course to Samothrace, and the day following to Neapolis, and from there to Philippi, which is a principle city of that district of Macedonia. And Macedonia was itself a colony. And Luke, Silas, and Paul were staying some days in this city. On the Sabbath day, they went forth outside of the gate by a riverside, where they supposed there was a place of prayer, and they sat down, and spoke to the women who had come together. And in the place they had chosen, a woman sold purple cloth of the city of Thyatira, and GOD opened his heart to listen to the words of Paul while the other two were nearby. So she and her whole household were baptized, and she said to them, "If you have judged me to be faithful to GOD, come into my house, and stay." So she persuaded the two of them to stay for a time.

CHAPTER 14

While the three of them were still staying with Lydia, they were going to prayer, and a girl having a spirit of Python met them. This girl brought her masters much gain by fortune telling. And she followed them, shouting, "These men are servants of the Most High GOD, who proclaim to you the way of salvation." She did this for many days, but finally Paul told the spirit, "I command you in the name

---

[952] Huh? Didn't they just mention in the previous paragraph that circumcision was largely no longer needed? But yes, many Christian communities do in fact still circumcise.

[953] From here on for quite awhile, the original text says "we" because it is written from Luke's perspective. I made the choice to write Acts in third person, though.

of JESUS Christ to come out of her." And it came out at once.
But her masters saw that her hope of profit had gone, so they seized Paul and Silas, and took them from the marketplace before the leaders. And they said to the magistrates, "These men, being Jews, are agitating our city, and set forth customs which it is not lawful for us to accept or to observe, being Romans." They said nothing of the real cause for arrest, that this girl was relieved of a spirit that they had exploited. The crowd was led in outrage against them, and the magistrates tore their clothes off them and commanded them beaten by rods. And after they had many wounds, they were thrown into prison.
And they charged the jailer to keep them safely, and after having received such a command, he threw them into the inner prison, and secured their feet in the stocks. Late that night, at around midnight, Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to GOD. And all the prisoners were listening. Then suddenly, there was a great earthquake and the foundations of the prison were shaken, and all the doors were opened and the chains of everyone were freed. When the jailer woke and saw the prison doors open, he drew his sword and was ready to commit suicide, for he could not accept his own failure. But Paul called out in a loud voice, "Don't hurt yourself! We are all still here!" He asked for guards to come with torches, and seeing that nobody had left, he fell down before them.
And he released them and asked, "What must I do to be saved?" for he perceived them to be righteous men. So they told him, "Believe in JESUS, and you will be saved, you and your household." They spoke the word of JESUS to him, and to all who were in his house. So he took them home and washed their wounds, then he and his household were all baptized. And since the whole house believed in JESUS, they set food before them and cared for them. In the morning, they released Paul and Silas, and they rejoined Luke. And the magistrates wanted them to be released secretly, but Paul insisted they be released publicly so there would be no later claims that they escaped. When they had brought them out, they asked them to depart from the city. They returned to Lydia's house, met with their brothers in faith, and after encouraging them, they departed.

CHAPTER 15

They came to Thessalonica, where there was a Jewish synagogue. And Paul went into it, and talked to them for three Sabbaths on the scriptures, explaining and demonstrating that the Christ had to suffer and rise again from the dead, and saying, "This JESUS, who I proclaim to you, is the Christ." Some of these Jews were persuaded, along with a good number of devout Greeks, and many prominent women.[954] But other Jews were driven by jealousy, and found a lot of violent and shiftless thugs and organized them into a crowd, and set the city into uproar.[955] And they assaulted the house of a man named Jason, and dragged him out before the leaders of the city, saying, "These who have turned the world upside down have come here also, who Jason has received. These all act contrary to the decrees of Caesar, saying that there is another king, JESUS." The leaders of the city and the crowd were all troubled when they heard this. Paul and Silas were sent away by night to Beroea, and when they arrived there, they went into a Jewish synagogue.
And these accepted the word of GOD more readily than those in Thessalonica, searching through the scriptures to see if what was said could be proven to be true. And using logic in accord with the word of GOD,[956] they came to find what they sought.[957] Among these were also many Greek men and women.
But the Jews who had not believed in Thessalonica heard news about Paul in Beroea, so they came there an stirred up mischief. So Paul was sent away to sea, but Silas stayed with Timothy. Paul landed in Athens, and sent word for Silas and Timothy to head over. While Paul waited in Athens, his spirit was provoked as he saw the city full of idols. So he talked with the Jewish synagogue and other

---

[954] Jewish culture being not outright misogynistic, but very much concerned with women acting a certain way, any women who tended not to be stay-at-home wives but were independently wealthy, tended to not feel well treated under the Torah. For a woman to be considered a widow, two witnesses were required. However, the Torah law didn't think much of women as witnesses, so if one of those was her, she was not a widow but an abandoned woman, and couldn't inherit or remarry.
[955] If this sounds unbelievable, keep in mind that groups like Black Lives Matter and Antifa were able to find people willing to burn down cities from ordinary Americans. Human beings are capable of great good, but also terrifying evil.
[956] I've never bought the notion that scientific reasoning is at odds with theology. An examining mind tends to find the real answers far better than those who blindly accept facts.
[957] I'm calling to memory here what JESUS said about "Seek, and you will find."

devout people, and also talked in the marketplace. And some called him a babbler, while others said, "He seems to be advocating foreign deities," because he preached JESUS and the resurrection. And they asked him, "What is this new teaching? For you have told us strange things, and we want to know what they mean." And looking around at all the temples and idols in Athens, and how few people seemed occupied in worldly matters, preferring philosophy to other pursuits, he said, "I can tell that you men of Athens are very religious. As I passed along Athens, I saw all of your objects of worship, all of your temples to the gods and all of the idols that you have set up," and he spoke without condemnation, unlike the Jews might have done. Then walking to a rock outcropping called an Areopagus continued, "On my travels through this town, I noticed that you have set up an altar here that caught my interest." And he pointed it out, "I ask you, can you read this text?"
And the text read «ΣΕ ΄ΕΝΑΝ ἌΓΝΩΣΤΟ ΘΕΌ» And the crowd of Athenians told him, "This altar says, 'TO AN UNKNOWN GOD.'"[958] He nodded, "Yes, this is correct.[959] Now what you worship in ignorance,[960] I now announce to you. This is the GOD who made the world and all things in it. He is the DEAREST of Heaven and Earth, and he does not dwell in temple made by human hands, nor is he carved by human hands, nor can he be served by human hands for he has never needed anything (since he gives all life and breath instead to us). He made from one blood every nation of the human race, he made the seasons, he made the boundaries of our dwellings, and if we should seek out GOD, that we should not find him far from us. 'For in him we live, and move, and have our being.' As some of your own poets have said, 'For we are also his offspring.' Since we are offspring of GOD, we ought not to think of the divine as gold, silver, wood, bone, or stone, something to be carved or engraved by human artwork and design.[961] And GOD has forgiven such idolatry in the past, but it is time to be serious and repent, for GOD himself raised from the dead in the man he has appointed for our sins. So you who have heard of righteousness are without excuse."[962] Some of them mocked this teaching of resurrection, but others wanted to know more. And Paul thus taught about JESUS, and what had been done.
Among the people who believed were Dionysius the Areopagite, and a woman named Damaris. Now there were also others, but these were more well-known and outspoken among the followers.
And after this, Paul left Athens and went to Corinth. There he found a Jew named Aquila (who came from Italy) and his wife Priscilla. In those days, Claudius had commanded all Jews to depart from Rome. And he lived with them, since they were tentmakers by trade. He talked in the synagogue every Sabbath and persuaded many Jews and Greeks. But when Silas and Timothy came, he spoke more to the Jews that JESUS was the Christ, and they opposed him and accused him of blasphemy, while quoting from scripture in a way that was itself blasphemy, so Paul shook out his clothing against him and said, "Your blood be on your own heads. I am clean. From now on, I will go to the non-Jewish people." And he went to the house of a man named Titus Justus, a man whose house was next door to the synagogue. Now Crispus the ruler of the synagogue, when he heard Paul preaching from the house adjacent, believed in GOD and so did his household, and many Corinthians also believed and were baptized. And Paul was shocked that people he would not speak to were now coming to him to be baptized. But JESUS said to Paul in the night by a vision, "Do not be afraid, but speak and do not be silent, for I am with you, and no one will attack you to harm you, for I have many people in this city." And Paul lived there a year and six months, teaching the word of GOD among them.
But then Gallio was proconsul of Achaia, and the Jews rose up against Paul and brought him to be judged, saying, "This one persuades people to worship GOD contrary to the law." Before Paul could speak in his defense, Gallio said, "If indeed it were a matter of wrong or of wicked crime, you Jews, it

---

[958] Apparently, years ago, there was a plague, and sheep after sheep were sacrificed to try to appease the gods. Finally, a man named Epimenides built an altar to an unknown GOD after noticing that sheep of a certain area were sitting down in a certain place rather than grazing. The inscription apparently also says in Greek, «*They fashioned a tomb for you, holy and high one. Cretans, always liars, evil beasts, idle bellies. But you are not dead: you live and abide forever, for in you we live and move and have our being*.»
[959] I decided to phrase this as a Socratic question, that is a question that the answer is already known, because such a question would have been understood in Athens.
[960] The Greek above reads, "*Se énan Ágnosto Theó*" from *agnosto* we get words like agnostic. So ignorance is probably a wrong word because of connotations.
[961] Here he calls out the folly of their idolatry.
[962] The original text speaks of a day of judgement. But I don't believe in that stuff. I do believe that he is essentially saying is for them to repent of their idolatry.

would be reasonable that I should bear with you. But if they are questions about words and names and your own law, look to it yourselves. For I do not want to be a judge of these matters." He drove them from the judgement seat. Then they all took hold of Sosthenes, a ruler of the synagogue, and beat him before the judgement seat. But Gallio was not concerned with such matters.
Paul sailed from there to Syria with Priscilla and Aquila. And he shaved his head in Cenchreae, for he had a vow.[963] Then he entered a synagogue and talked to the Jews. But when they asked him to stay longer, he declined, saying to them, "I will return again to you if GOD wills," then he set sail from Ephesus. When he had landed at Caesarea, he went up and greeted the church, and went down to Antioch. Having spent some time there, he departed, and went through the region of Galatia, and Phrygia, in order, strengthening all the disciples.
While he was in Ephesus, a certain Jew called Apollos (an Alexandrian by race)[964] came to Ephesus. This man had been instructed in the way of GOD; and being fervent in spirit, he spoke and taught accurately the things concerning JESUS, although he knew only the baptism of John. And he began to speak in the synagogue. But when Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they took him aside, and explained to him the way of GOD more accurately, teaching him the Gospel. When he wanted to go next into Achaia, they wrote letters to introduce him to the other disciples. And he helped to show by the scriptures that JESUS was the Christ.
While Apollos was in Ephesus, Paul, having passed in Ephesus, came and found certain disciples. And he asked them, "Did you receive the *Ruach ha Kodesh* when you believed?" They said to him, "No, we have not even heard that there is a *Ruach ha Kodesh*." So he asked, "How then were you baptized?" And they said, "Into John's baptism." So Paul said, "John indeed baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying to the people that they should believe in the one who would come after him, that is, in JESUS." And when they heard this, they asked to be baptized again, this time in the name of JESUS. When Paul had laid his hands on them, the *Ruach ha Kodesh* came on them, and they spoke with other tongues and prophesied. They were about twelve men in all.[965]
He entered into the synagogue, and spoke boldly for a period of three months, reasoning and persuading about the things concerning the Kingdom of GOD. But when some were hardened and disobedient, speaking evil of the Way before the crowd, he departed from them, and separated the disciples, reasoning daily in the school of Tyrannus. This continued for two years, so that all those who lived in Asia heard the word of JESUS, both Jews and Greeks.
And GOD worked special miracles by the hands of Paul, so that even handkerchiefs or aprons were carried away from his body to the sick, and the evil spirits went out. But some of the itinerant Jewish exorcists, took it upon themselves to invoke over those who had the evil spirits the name of JESUS, saying, "I adjure you by JESUS who Paul preaches." But the evil spirits answered, "JESUS I know, and Paul I know, but who are you?" And the man in who the evil spirit was, having leapt on them, having overpowered them all, prevailed against them so that they fled from that house naked and wounded.[966] This story got back to Jews and Greeks living in Ephesus, and they were afraid. And many came to believe in the name of JESUS, confessing their sins and deeds. And many of those who practiced magical arts brought their books together and burned them in the sight of all. They counted the price of them, and found it to be fifty thousand pieces of silver. So the word of JESUS was growing and becoming mighty.
So Paul determined when he had passed through Macedonia and Achaia, to go to Jerusalem, saying, "After I have been there, I must also see Rome." So he sent Timothy and Erastus into Macedonia, while he stayed in Asia for a time. But there was a scandal concerning the Way, for a certain man named Demetrius, a silversmith, who made silver shrines of Artemis, brought no little business to the

---

[963] This is unclear, but it probably refers to the Nazirite vow, and what you are supposed to do after it's over, shave your head and burn the hairs on a fire.
[964] Huh? This guy is a Jew with a Greek name (Apollos, after the deity Apollo) who is from Alexandria, in Egypt.
[965] This is essentially an echo of the original apostles, framing the idea that just as JESUS had disciples, his disciples can in turn be chosen. It also calls to mind Jacob's sons.
[966] There's a story of Zen Buddhism about a man who understands all of the universe in a single finger. And he shows his thumb to his students. But a kid who is not among his students sees this and tries to do it with others, despite not understanding. So the guy chops off his thumb and asks him to hold it up, and the kid is enlightened. There is a difference between repeating something, and having it be part of you.

craftsmen, who he gathered together, with the workmen of like occupation, and said, "Sirs, you know that by this business we have our wealth. You see and hear, that not at Ephesus alone, but almost throughout all Asia, this Paul has persuaded and turned away many people, saying that they are no gods, that are made with hands. Not only is there danger that this our trade come into disrepute, but also that the temple of the great goddess Artemis will be counted as nothing, and that she should even be deposed from her magnificence, who all Asia and the world worships." And the Greeks there were filled with anger, shouting, "Great is Artemis of the Ephesians." And they rushed into the theater and seized Gaius and Aristarchus, Paul's companions in travel while in Macedonia. Now Paul wanted to enter there, but the other disciples would not let him, fearing his safety. They brought Alexander out of the crowd, who would have made a defense to the people. But when they perceived that he was a Jew, they shouted over him, "Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!" The town clerk quieted the crowd, "Men of Ephesus, is there anyone who does not know that the city of the Ephesians is temple keeper of the great Artemis, and of the image which fell down from Zeus? You ought to be quiet, and to do nothing rash. For you have brought these men here, who are neither robbers of temples nor blasphemers of our goddess. If therefore Demetrius and the craftsmen who are with him have a matter against anyone, the courts are open. Let them press charges against one another. But if you seek anything further, it will be settled in the regular assembly. If we are in danger of being accused concerning this day's riot, there is no cause for that." When he had thus spoken, he dismissed the assembly. After the uproar had stopped, Paul left for Macedonia. And after preaching to them, he headed to Greece. He stayed for three months, but a plot was made against him by the Jews as he was about to head on for Syria, so he determined to return through Macedonia. He was accompanied by Sopater (from Boreoea), Aristarchus and Secundus (from Thessalonia), Gaius (from Derbe), Timothy, and Tychicus and Trophimus (from Asia). These went on ahead to wait for Paul and Luke at Troas. And they sailed away from Philippi after the days of Unleavened Bread, and came to them at Troas in five days, where they stayed seven days.

On the first day of the week, when we were gathered together to break bread, Paul talked with them, intending to depart on the next day, and continued his speech until midnight. There were many lights in the upper chamber where we were gathered together. Now a certain young man named Eutychus sat in the window, weighed down with deep sleep. As Paul spoke still longer, being weighed down by his sleep, he fell down from the third story, and was taken up dead. And Paul heard the sound, and went downstairs and looked upon him, and embracing him, he said, "Do not be troubled, for his life is in him." Then he had went up, and broke bread and ate, and he talked with the people until the break of day. And they brought the boy in alive, and all were greatly comforted. But Luke and his companions who went ahead to the ship that would set sail for Assos (intending to take Paul aboard), while Paul himself intended to go by land. And Paul met them in Assos, and they took him aboard, and all of them came to Mitylene. From there, they sailed to Chios, then the next day they landed at Samos, and the day after they came to Miletus. For Paul had determined to sail past Ephesus, that he might not have to spend time in Asia, to be in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost. From Miletus he sent to Ephesus, and called to himself the elders of the church. When they had come to him, he said to them, "You yourselves know how I was with you all the time, serving JESUS with all humility, suffering trials which happened to me by the plots of the Jews. You know how I did not hold back from teaching you publicly and from house to house, testifying both to Jews and to Greeks repentance toward GOD, and faith toward our JESUS. And now, compelled by the Spirit, I am going to Jerusalem, not knowing what will happen to me there, except that the *Ruach ha Kodesh* testifies in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions wait for me. But I make my life an account of nothing precious to myself, so that I may finish my race, and the ministry which I received from JESUS, to fully testify to the Good News of the grace of GOD. And now, I know that you all will see my face no more. Therefore I testify to you today that I am innocent of everyone's blood, for I did not hold back from declaring to you the whole plan of GOD. Watch after all your flock, in which the *Ruach ha Kodesh* has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of GOD purchased with his own blood. For I know that after my departure, vicious wolves will enter among you against the flock. Men will arise from among you, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them. Therefore, be watchful. Now I entrust you to GOD, to give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified. In all things I gave

you an example, that so laboring you ought to help the weak, and to remember the words of JESUS, that he himself said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'" When he had spoken these things, he knelt down and prayed with them all. They all wept with him, and fell on Paul's neck and kissed him, sorrowing most of all because of the word which he had spoken, that they should see his face no more. And they accompanied him to the ship.

CHAPTER 16

So Paul parted from them and set sail, and they came to Cos, then the next day to Rhodes, and from there to Patara, and they took a ship to Phoenicia and sailed from there. And when they were in sight of Cyprus, they sailed to Syria and landed at Tyre, for the ship wanted to unload her cargo. And they stayed for seven days with disciples, who told Paul from the Spirit of GOD, that he should not go up to Jerusalem. These disciples, with wives and children, brought Paul and his companions on their way until we were out of the city. And after kneeling down on the beach and praying, they said farewell to one another. And they went on board the ship, and the others returned to their own. Next, they headed to Ptolemais, greeted their brothers there, and stayed the day. Then they headed to Caesarea, and stayed at the house of Philip the evangelist. Now this man had four virgin daughters who prophesied. And a certain prophet named Agabus came down from Judea. And taking Paul's belt, he bound his own feet and hands, and said, "Thus says the *Ruach ha Kodesh*: 'So will the Jews in Jerusalem bind the man who owns this belt, and will deliver him into the hands of non-Jewish people.'" The other disciples and the people of that place urged him not to go up to Jerusalem. Then Paul answered, "What are you doing, weeping and breaking my heart? For I am ready not only to be bound, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of JESUS." When he would not be persuaded, they ceased, saying, "GOD'S will be done." So he went with his companions to Jerusalem. And some of the disciples from Caesarea also went, bringing a man of Cyprus, an early disciple, with who they would stay. And Paul and the others went in and stayed overnight. The next day, they met with James and the elders. When he had greeted them, he reported one by one the things which GOD had worked among the non-Jewish people through his ministry. They, when they heard it, glorified GOD. They said to him, "You see, brother, how many thousands there are among the Jews of those who have believed, and they are all zealous for the law. They have been informed about you, that you teach all the Jews who are among the non-Jews to forsake Moses, telling them not to circumcise their children neither to walk after the customs. What then? The multitude must certainly meet. They will hear that you have come. Therefore do what we tell you. We have four men who have taken a vow. Take them, and purify yourself with them, and pay their expenses for them, that they may shave their heads. Then all will know that there is no truth in the things that they have been informed about you, but that you yourself also walk keeping the law. But concerning the non-Jewish who believe, we have written our decision that they should keep themselves from food offered to idols, from blood, from strangled things, and from sexual immorality."[967] Then Paul took the men, and the next day, purified himself and went with them into the temple, declaring the fulfillment of the days of purification, until the offering was offered for every one of them.

When the seven days were almost completed, the Jews from Asia, when they saw him in the temple, stirred up all the crowd and laid hands on him, crying out, "Men of Israel, help. This is the man who teaches all men everywhere against the people, and the law, and this place. Moreover, he also brought Greeks into the temple, and has defiled this holy place." For they had previously seen Trophimus, the Ephesian, with him in the city, and they supposed that Paul had brought him into the temple. All the city was moved, and the people ran together. They seized Paul and dragged him out of the temple. Immediately the doors were shut. As they were trying to kill him, news came up to the commanding officer of the regiment that all Jerusalem was in an uproar.[968]

And soldiers and centurions came, and ran down to them. When they saw the chief captain and the

---

[967] It sounds to me like there is a schism between what the Christians of Jerusalem believe and when the Christians in Gentile nations believe, as these ones are far more Jewish in their thinking than Peter and Paul. Had he told them that he had in fact taught new teachings, would they have hurt him? They make him do things to prove he isn't like was accused, but shouldn't the Gospel be about how the law of Moses is fulfilled?

[968] That sorta thing gives me trauma about my brief days in a cult. The feeling that they lock the door and try to trap him like that is very scary.

soldiers, they stopped beating Paul. Then the commanding officer came near, arrested him, and inquired who he was and what he had done. Some shouted one thing and some another among the crowd. When they could not find out the truth because of the noise, they commanded him to be brought into the barracks. When Paul came to the stairs, it happened that he was carried by the soldiers because of the violence of the crowd, for the crowd of the people followed after, crying out, "Away with him." As Paul was about to be brought into the barracks, he asked the commanding officer, "May I speak something to you?" He said, "Do you know Greek? Are you not then the Egyptian, who before these days stirred up to sedition and led out into the wilderness the four thousand men of the Assassins?" Paul continued, "I am a Jew, from Tarsus in Cilicia, a citizen of no insignificant city. I beg you, allow me to speak to the people."
Having been given permission, Paul stood on the stairs and beckoned to the people. When there was a great silence, he spoke to them in the Hebrew language, saying, "Brothers and fathers, listen to the defense which I now make to you." When they heard that he spoke to them in the Hebrew language, they were even more quiet. He said, "I am indeed a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia, but brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel, instructed according to the strict manner of the law of our fathers. I persecuted this Way to the death, binding and delivering into prisons both men and women. As also the high priest and all the council of the elders testify, from who also I received letters to the brothers, and traveled to Damascus to bring them also who were there to Jerusalem in bonds to be punished. It happened that, as I made my journey, and came close to Damascus, about noon, suddenly there shone from the sky a great light around me. I fell to the ground, and heard a voice asking me why I was persecuting him. I answered, 'Who are you?' He said to me, 'I am JESUS of Nazareth, who you persecute.' Those who were with me indeed saw the light, and were afraid, but they did not hear the voice. I asked what I should do, and JESUS said to me, 'Arise, and go into Damascus. There you will be told about all things which are appointed for you to do.' And after that, I was struck blind by the voice. When I could not see I was led by the hand of those who were with me, and I came into Damascus. And a man named Ananias came to me and said to me, 'Brother Saul, receive your sight.' In that very hour I looked up at him. He said, 'The GOD of our fathers has appointed you to know his will, and to see the Righteous One, and to hear a voice from his mouth. For you will be a witness to all people of what you have seen and heard. Arise, be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on his name.' It happened that, when I had returned to Jerusalem, and while I prayed in the temple, I fell into a trance, and saw him saying to me, 'Hurry and get out of Jerusalem quickly, because they will not receive testimony concerning me from you.' I said, 'DEAREST, they themselves know that I imprisoned and beat in every synagogue those who believed in you. When the blood of Stephen, your witness, was shed, I also was standing by, and guarding the cloaks of those who killed him.' And he said to me, 'Depart, for I will send you out far from here to non-Jewish people.'"
While they listened and accepted his testimony, when he said that he was sent to non-Jewish people, they said, "Get rid of this fellow, for he is not fit to live!" And as they yelled, they threw off their cloaks, and threw dust into the air, and rushed toward him. But the commanding officer commanded him to be brought into the barracks, ordering him to be examined by scourging, that he might know for what crime they yelled at him like that. But Paul asked the centurion who stood by, "Is it lawful for you to scourge a man who is a Roman, and not found guilty?" And the centurion heard of it, he asked his commanding officer, "What should we do? For this man claims to be Roman." So the commanding officer asked him, "Tell me truly, are you a Roman?" And Paul said, "Yes." And he set about proving his Roman citizenship by various means. The commanding officer said, "I bought my citizenship at a price." But Paul said, "I was born a Roman." He told the man of his parents, and showed other evidence that convinced the man that he was indeed a Roman citizen by birth.[969] The commanding officer wanted to know why he was being accused by the Jews, so he freed him and set up a meeting with Paul before the council of priests, so he could hear their accusations.

CHAPTER 17

[969] Paul talks about how it isn't right for Romans to be punished in this way. This would have been a right from the Porcian Laws of 2nd Century BC. Also, *civis romanus sum*, or "I am a Roman," was said to be protection from harm, since Rome meted out harsh punishments against those who abused its citizens. Anyone critiquing Paul's Christian conversion could point to this incident, where he trusted in Rome, not GOD, to protect him. But whatever. It bought him some time against his accusers.

Paul said to the council, "I fear nothing to fear. I have lived before GOD with good conscience all of this time." At this, the high priest Ananias commanded those in the council to strike him on the mouth. The Paul asked, "Do you sit to judge me according to the law, and command me to be struck contrary to the law?" And those in council asked, "Do you malign GOD'S high priest?" Paul said, "I did not know, brothers, that he was high priest. For it is written, 'You must not speak evil of a ruler of your people.'" But looking around, Paul noticed that he was in mixed company of Pharisees and Sadducees, so he said to the council, "Men and brothers, I am a Pharisee, a son of Pharisees. Concerning the hope and resurrection of the dead I am being judged. Because I spoke that JESUS was raised from the dead." At this, an argument arose between the Pharisees and Sadducees, and the assembly was divided. For the Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, nor angel, nor spirit; but the Pharisees confess all of these. The Pharisees had no love for JESUS, but their belief in resurrection was at stake. Some of the Pharisees stood up, and declared, "We find no evil in this man. What if a spirit spoke to him, or an angel?" Then a great argument arose and the commanding officer, fearing that Paul would be torn in pieces by them, commanded the soldiers to go down and bring him into the barracks. The following night, GOD stood by him, and said, "Cheer up, for as you have testified about me at Jerusalem, so you must testify also at Rome."

When it was day, the Jews formed a conspiracy, and bound themselves under a curse, saying that they would neither eat nor drink until they had killed Paul. There were more than forty people who had made this conspiracy. They came to the chief priests and the elders, and said, "We have bound ourselves under a great curse, to taste nothing until we have killed Paul. Now therefore, you with the council inform the commanding officer that he should bring him down to you, as though you were going to judge his case more exactly. We are ready to kill him before he comes near."

But Paul's sister had a son, and he heard of this plot. And he entered the barrack to tell him this news. So Paul brought him to the commanding officer to deliver the message, "The Jews have agreed to ask you to bring Paul down to the council tomorrow, as though they intended to inquire somewhat more thoroughly concerning him. But do not yield to them, for more than forty men lie in wait for him. Now they are ready, looking for the promise from you." The commanding officer said, "Tell no one that you have revealed these things to me." Then he called his centurions and said, "Prepare two hundred soldiers to go as far as Caesarea, with seventy horsemen, and two hundred spearmen, at nine tonight." And he told Paul that he would put him on an animal and they would ride to Felix. For Felix was governor in this land. And he wrote a letter:

> *Claudius Lysias to the most excellent governor Felix: Greetings. This man was seized by the Jews, and was about to be killed by them, when I came with the soldiers and rescued him, having learned that he was a Roman. Desiring to know the cause why they accused him, I brought him down to their council. I found him to be accused about questions of their law, but not to be charged with anything worthy of death or of imprisonment. When I was told that there would be a plot against the man, I sent him to you immediately, charging his accusers also to bring their accusations against him before you. Farewell.*

And so, the soldiers took Paul with this letter to Antipatris. When they came to Caesarea and delivered the letter to the governor, they also presented Paul to him. When the governor had read it, he asked what province he was from. When he understood that he was from Cilicia, he said, "I will hear you fully when your accusers also arrive." He commanded that he be kept in Herod's palace.

CHAPTER 18

After five days, the high priest, Ananias came to where Paul was. They also took an orator named Tertullus. And Tertullus began to accuse Paul while flattering Felix, "We see that by you we enjoy much peace, and that by your foresight reforms are coming to this nation, we accept it in all ways and in all places, most excellent Felix, with all thankfulness. But, that I do not delay you, I entreat you to bear with us and hear a few words. For we have found this man to be a plague, an instigator of insurrections among all the Jews throughout the world, and a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes. He even tried to profane the temple, and we arrested him. And we would have judged him according to our law, but the chief captain Lysias came, and with great violence took him away out of our hands, commanding his accusers to come to you. By examining him yourself you may ascertain all these things of which we accuse him." And other Jews used far less flowery language to accuse Paul.

Finally, Felix asked Paul to speak in his defense, so Paul said, "I know know that you have been a judge for several years, and his ruled justly. It has not been more than twelve days since I went to oweship in Jerusalem. In the temple they did not find me disputing with anyone or stirring up a crowd, either in the synagogues, or in the city. Nor can they prove to you the things of which they now accuse me. But this I confess to you, that after the Way, which they call a sect, so I serve the GOD of our fathers, believing all things which are the law and the prophets. I have hope in GOD that there is a resurrection both of the just and unjust, for GOD rains on both. I therefore do my best to always have a clear conscience toward GOD and people. Now after some years, I came to bring gifts for the needy to my nation, and offerings. Then some Jews from Asia found me in the temple, not with a mob or inciting riot, but purifying myself. If they had an issue with me, they ought to have come before you. Unless, of course, it is for what I said while standing among them, 'Concerning the resurrection of the dead I am being judged before you today.'"
Felix deferred them, saying, "When Lysias, the commanding officer, comes down, I will decide your case." Then he ordered his centurions that he should be in custody and any of his friends be allowed to visit him. After a few days though, Felix came with Drusilla, his wife, who was Jewish, and sent for Paul, and heard him concerning the faith in JESUS. As he talked about righteousness, self-control, and the judgement to come, Felix was terrified. Felix told Paul, "I will summon you when it is convenient for me." And he talked with him on occasion, and it was his wish that Paul be given money. But after two years, Felix was succeeded by Porcius Festus, and desiring to gain favor with the Jews, Felix left Paul imprisoned.
When Festus came into the province, the high priest and other Jewish leaders told him about Paul, and urged him to bring Paul to Jerusalem (for they planned to kill him on the way). But Festus decided that Paul should be kept in Caesarea, and asked any who wanted to accuse him to come there instead. Some the Jews from Jerusalem came and gave accusations which they could not prove. But Paul said in his defense, "Neither against the law of the Jews, nor against the temple, nor against Caesar, have I sinned at all." Now Festus wanted to gain favor with the Jews, so he asked him whether he would go to Jerusalem. But Paul said, "I am standing before Caesar's judgement seat, where I ought to be tried. I have done no wrong to the Jews, as you also know very well. For if I have done wrong, I do not refuse to die, but if none of those things is true, no one can give me up to them. I appeal to Caesar." So Festus sent for Agrippa, and explained what Paul had said. And Agrippa said to Festus, "I also would like to hear the man myself."
The next day, Agrippa and Bernice arrived, and had Paul brought in. And Festus explained that the Jews had said that he ought not live any longer, but he could not find any real charge against him. So Agrippa said to Paul, "You may speak for yourself." Then Paul made his defense, "I think myself happy, King Agrippa, that I am to make my defense before you this day concerning all the things that I am accused by the Jews, especially because you are expert in all customs and questions which are among Jews. Therefore I beg you to hear me patiently." And Paul began to tell of his youth and growing up as a strict Pharisee, how he had punished the followers of JESUS, and his time at Damascus. He even mentioned that he voted against them when it was decided whether they were to be put to death or not, and he tried to make them blaspheme. He persecuted them even in foreign cities. But all of this changed when he went to Damascus. And he described his conversion to King Arippa. Paul said, "Therefore, King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the vision, but declared first to them of Damascus, at Jerusalem, and throughout all the country of Judea, and also to the non-Jews, that they should repent and turn to GOD, doing works worthy of repentance. For this reason Jews seized me when I was in the temple, and tried to kill me. Having therefore obtained the help that is from GOD, I stand testifying both to small and great, saying nothing but what the Prophets and Moses said would happen, how the Christ would suffer, and how, by the resurrection of the dead, he would be first to proclaim light both to these people and to non-Jewish people." But Festus said to all this, "Paul, you are crazy. Your great learning is driving you insane."
But he said, "I am not crazy, most excellent Festus, but boldly declare words of truth and reasonableness. For the king knows of these things, to who also I speak freely. For I am persuaded that none of these things is hidden from him, for this has not been done in a corner. King Agrippa, do you believe the prophets? I know that you believe." Agrippa said to Paul, "With a little persuasion are

you trying to make me a Christian?" But although he did not necessarily believe, he found nothing about what he said deserving death. Agrippa said to Festus, "This man might have been set free if he had not appealed to Caesar." Thus Paul remained a captive.
So they delivered Paul to a man named Julius along with some other prisoners. And Julius treated Paul kindly, and gave him permission to go to his friends and refresh himself. And it was a long voyage by ship to many places near Italy. When time had passed, and the voyage was now dangerous, Paul said, "I predict that the voyage will be with injury and much loss, not only of the cargo and the ship, but also of our lives." But the centurions did not listen, because the area was not suitable to winter in, they wanted to go out further to sea and winter in the region of Crete. But before long, a stormy wind beat down from shore, for GOD blew the ship instead to a small island called Caudam. And fearing that they would run aground on the Syrtis, they lowered the sea anchor, and so were driven along. The storm continued, and the next day they began to throw things overboard. Now they were without food and stranded, so Paul said, "You should have listened, and not set sail from Crete, and we would have avoided this loss. Now I say to you to cheer up, for there will be no loss of life among you, but only destruction of the ship. This night, an angel belonging to the GOD told me, 'Do not be afraid, Paul. You must stand before Caesar. And GOD has granted you all those who sail with you.' Therefore, sirs, cheer up. For I believe GOD, that it will be just as it has been spoken to me. But we must run aground on a certain island."
Now it was the fourteenth night of sailing, and about midnight, the sailors was that they might be near land. So they tested the depth, and it moved from twenty to fifteen fathoms. And fearing they would run into rocks, they let go of four anchors. And they were going to lower a boat, but Paul said, "Unless we stay in the ship, we won't survive." This time, they listened, and let the boat fall from its ropes. And Paul urged them to eat, for it had been fourteen days at sea, telling them that GOD would not harm one hair on their heads. Then Paul took bread, he gave thanks to GOD in the presence of all, and he broke it, and began to eat. And all the others likewise ate. In all, we were two hundred seventy-six souls on the ship. And when they had eaten, they lightened the ship, throwing out excess wheat into the sea. Then they sailed into the beach, and ran aground. And the soldiers wanted to kill the prisoners, so none would try to escape. But the centurion, having seen Paul's efforts to save them, put a stop to that, and instead told those who could swim to throw themselves overboard and first to land. And the rest followed, either by using planks or riding on flotsam to shore.

CHAPTER 19

Eventually, they figured out that the island was Malta. And the natives there showed them kindness, for it was rainy and cold, but the natives welcomed them and built a fire to warm everyone. But while Paul was gathering sticks, a viper came and bit his hand. And the natives saw the snake hanging from him, and they decided that justice had been assigned to him, and he must be an evil man. But then he shook the creature off into the fire and neither had swelling nor fell dead, so they decided maybe he was a god.
In the neighborhood, there were other lands belonging to the chief official of the island, named Publius, and Paul and the others stayed with them for three days. And the father of Publius was sick from fever and dysentery. So Paul prayed over him and lay hands on him, and he was healed. And when this was done, others who had disease also came, and were cured of that. So they helped Paul and the others from the ship, and prepared a boat with all the things they might need. And after three months, they sailed in a ship known as the Twin Brothers, heading the Syracuse, then arriving Rhegium. Then a south wind blew them to Puteoli, and finally the made it to Rome. And Paul saw some of his brothers in the faith there, and he thanked GOD, and took courage.
Now when Paul entered Rome, he was allowed to stay by himself with the soldier who guarded him. After three days, he called together the local Jewish leaders, and he told them "Though I had done nothing against the people, or the customs of our fathers, still was delivered prisoner from Jerusalem into the hands of the Romans, who, when they had examined me, desired to set me free, because there was no death ground in me.[970] But when the Jews spoke against it, I was forced to appeal to Caesar,

[970] I put it this way as there is a passage from the *Tao te Ching* about a man being able to wander through places with tigers or battlefields without being harmed.

not that I had anything about which to accuse my nation. For this cause therefore I asked to see you and to speak with you. For because of the hope of Israel I am bound with this chain." But they said to him, "We neither received letters from Judea concerning you, nor did any of the brothers come here and report or speak any evil of you. But we desire to hear from you what you think. For, as concerning this sect, it is known to us that everywhere it is spoken against." So that day, many people came to him at his lodging. He explained to them, testifying about the Kingdom of GOD, and persuading them concerning JESUS, both from the law of Moses and from the Prophets, from morning until evening. Now some believed the things which were spoken, while other disbelieved. When they did not agree among themselves, they departed after Paul had said, "The *Ruach ha Kodesh* spoke rightly through Isaiah, the prophet, to your fathers, saying, 'Go to this people, and say, in hearing, you will hear, but will in no way understand. In seeing, you will see, but will in no way perceive. For this people's heart has grown callous. Unless they should see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their heart, and would turn again to me; for then I would heal them.' Be it known therefore to you, that the salvation of GOD is sent to the Jews and the Gentiles. They will also listen to me."

And when he had said these words, the Jews departed, having a great dispute among themselves. Paul stayed two whole years in his own rented house, and received all who were coming to him. He proclaimed the Kingdom of GOD, and teaching the things concerning JESUS Christ without being hindered.

THE MISSION OF MAGDALENE

CHAPTER 1

Now Mary Magdalene had supported the church through her work and finances as did the other women. But she was deeply dissatisfied with this. Indeed, Mary wanted to serve the LORD, and spread the word of JESUS and how he died for all sins. Yet Mary had heard of the stoning of Stephen, how James and John had died at the hand of Herod, and how Peter was imprisoned, before the LORD released him. And finally, she had enough. And she said to Peter, "Let me also go out among the land and spread the Gospel to the people. It is my mission and I will not set my LORD aside to be safe in a house." But Peter said to her, "It is not right for a woman to wander the land in this way. This is man's work." But his wife glared at him, and he changed his mind, "But if you insist, let the zealot Simon train you to defend others and yourself." And Simon the Zealot showed her to defend against attack with a knife. But she was not comfortable being a follower of JESUS and stabbing people, so she asked him to instead protect herself unarmed and with a staff. And when he was satisfied that she was in less danger, he returned her to Peter.

Peter said, "If you must go, you ought to dress yourself like a man and wear bulky clothing. I have heard that women walking without men in some countries have been molested." And he also sent her with a woman who JESUS had healed of twelve years of bleeding, named Veronica. Now Veronica was not dressed as a man, so Mary protested about this. Peter said, "I also protest at this, for it was part of the law that a man should not dress as a woman, nor should a man wear women's clothing. Nevertheless, I believe that a 'man' traveling with a woman will be more safe than two women." Veronica asked, "If this is the case, why can we both not dress as men?" But Peter shook his head, "I dare not anger the LORD by committing a sin twice. Also, if one of you is exposed, both of you will be suspected." And this reasoning seemed reasonable. So Mary cut her hair short like a boy, and gave up her possessions to support the church, leaving only traveling money.

CHAPTER 2

Now Peter was still not satisfied, so JESUS's mother Mary asked, "Why not let her take a short trip to prove her worth? I mean to settle down in Ephesus with Lazarus, my son.[971] Mary can say she is traveling with her wife, mother-in-law, and his adopted son."

At this, Veronica protested, "But we look nothing like each other! Lazarus is adopted, and I don't look like your daughter. Also, Mary as my husband?!?" After much argument, Mary decided that Mary Magdalene looked more like her daughter, Veronica would still have to be Mary's wife if they were to

[971] The Beloved Disciple is named as his son in previous text, and Lazarus not John has been revealed as this disciple.

continue to travel, and Lazarus was a son-in-law.
And so they set off on their journey. And they headed north on foot from Israel toward the town of Ephesus, but the were stopped on the way. A small group of soldiers had decided to guard the borders between Syria and Cilicia, for they had heard of recent troubles with a new sect from Israel, and how Pilate had lost his reputation. They were determined to stop any more trouble before it started, though they were only so effective since there were no similar guards for ports at sea, and they had requested to do this on their own. And they were checking names that people gave orally against census records. It was very disorganized, and every person had to be checked against their town of birth, so the line was taking days for a few people to move. At last, they got to Mary's group. They pointed to Lazarus, "Name and town of origin?" Lazarus said, "I am Lazarus of Bethany, we are from Israel. I am this woman's adopted son." So the guards opened the box of cities and towns in Israel, and found his name. "And you?" they asked pointing to JESUS's mother. She said, "My name is *Miryam bat Yoakim* of Bethlehem." Another long silence as they checked her data. Then they pointed to Veronica, "What about you?" And Veronica said, "I'm Veronica of Capernaum, and I am his wife," pointing to Mary Magdalene, "though my parents were from..." But they told her to be silent while they checked their records. And then Mary Magdalene was left, "I am Mary... Meraioth of Magdala." But they checked, and checked again, but could find no such person. She know she would be searched soon, so she prayed silently to JESUS. The LORD intervened. "These aren't the people we are looking for," said one of the guards, "Move along."[972] The other soldiers protested that this, but the guard explained, "Look, these people are from Israel! I have heard that a prophet named JESUS of Nazareth came from there, and stirred up trouble. Right? But look at these pages! There is no record of this JESUS being born in Nazareth! There's a JESUS there, but he's a different age! There's a record over here of a JESUS born in Bethlehem, but then all records mysteriously disappear, like they left in the middle of the night. Whatever is going on in Israel, they are backwards mess of a country that cannot keep their paperwork working." At this point, the man began to grumble about how difficult it had been to correctly keep track of Israel's taxes, as the group was pushed ahead to deal with others.
And having made it to Ephesus, she sent a letter to Peter, saying,

> *Grace to you and peace be with you, I, Mary of Magdala and Veronica my sister in Christ, write to you, Peter to tell you the news. We have made it to Ephesus without anyone stopping us, although there was a close call on the way to Asia Minor. I heartily hope that Christ is with you on your own endeavors.*

And Peter wrote back a similar letter instructing the two women to head to Rome and then go north... or something. Since they had no fare for a ship, they went from the region of Phrygia to Macedonia then to Illyricum, before heading south to Rome. And here, she started her ministry.

CHAPTER 3

Now a certain famous emperor[973] was in power in Rome. And Mary and Veronica were using eggs as a symbol for rebirth, and proclaiming, "Our LORD, JESUS Christ has risen!" And the emperor, upon hearing this, laughed. He was an emperor who was loved by the people, though the Senate despised him. So he was in person and within earshot. And Mary asked, "What is so funny? We have seen our Savior and he lives." So he said to her, "If your Savior as you call him has really risen from the dead, then ask him to turn these white eggs red." And so began the tradition of egg dyeing, for the LORD made the eggs an intense color of red. Seeing that Mary was the leader (and not knowing she was a woman), he said, "Guards! Seize this troublemaker! Show him what we do to people who make trouble in our city." Now, this emperor was a dictator,[974] not a legitimately elected emperor, so he did not necessarily deal with crime in a legal fashion. Instead of taking her to be tried, the guards put Mary alone on a boat with no rudder, and shoved her away from the dock. And he wanted to watch as she was sent to her doom, and stationed guards with ranged weapons to make sure that she didn't swim back to shore. But Mary called out, "Beware the Ides of March!" for the LORD foretold his doom. And that very year, he was stabbed to death.

---

[972] An obvious reference to *Star Wars*.
[973] Mary Magdalene's stated time of mission is around 44 AD, when James and John died by Herod, and Peter was arrested. Julius Caesar would have been in power.
[974] The title "dictator" was a legitimate emergency title in Rome, but he exploited the hell out of it.

CHAPTER 4

As for Mary, she continued away from shore, and fierce winds and waves knocked her this way and that, and storm came up and she was knocked overboard. But the LORD was with her, and she woke up in shores of Massalia.[975] She had been at sea for about two or three days, and was very thirsty and rather hungry. But she found water from a spring, and nuts and berries from nearby trees. Making her way to town, she was shocked to see the state of things.

The city had been devoted to pagan idols on a level that typically got a town destroyed back in the time of Jericho, and they were about to sacrifice their children to these gods. And the blood of animals was also on their hands, such that Mary had to stifle her own sickness. So Mary asked the townspeople where their governor was. And she visited him, and begged him to put a stop to this, but he would not, saying, "It has long been our policy to have religious freedom. They are, I suppose, just slightly decadent. But they are breaking none of our laws." Mary asked, "Is it not against the laws of GOD and of Heaven to do such thing? Even though JESUS forgives all sins, I cannot see how he would not be disgusted by this display!" So the governor asked her, "Is this GOD of your as powerful as you say? If you can pray to your GOD and he will make it so that I have an heir, I will grant your request. For my wife is barren, or I am."

And Mary was about to answer, when he stomach loudly growled. She said, "I will indeed, but could you give me something to eat?" And the governor had a dish made for her. An amphorae of garum was opened, and fresh olives, onions, root vegetables, and barley were cooked together. Then a duck was cooked with fresh herbs and butter, and wine was added to the mix. Mary ate well after a long period of hunger and thirst. Then the governor said, "I will send my servants to give you a bath, and you can rest the day from your journey, and tomorrow you will pray to this GOD of yours."

But Mary was alarmed, "Bath?!? Sir, I have something to confess..." and she explained to him that she did not think it safe for a woman to travel in certain lands. But the governor of Massalia said, "In this town and in much of Gaul, we welcome a great number of things that other people might consider odd. If your LORD accepts you, so do I." And so Mary stripped naked before taking her rest for the night, and then male and female servants washed her in scented oils and hot water. And she rested in a bed stuffed with lavender and chamomile.

And the next day, she prayed fervently to the LORD that the governor would have his heir. And the LORD granted the man's request, and his wife became pregnant. So it was that the governor made the people of the land worship the LORD and cease all of their idolatry. After this, the governor left his nice house behind, and offered to let her stay there while he was gone. For he said, "I want to go see this man Peter and learn more about this Gospel." So he boarded a ship with his pregnant wife, and she was allowed to stay there while he was gone.

But although she was surrounded by luxury, she remembered who she was and what she was about. And she went out into the city and began to preach the news of JESUS Christ. And she preached many of JESUS's parables to them. And many were convinced, though the city retained its strange way of looking at personal freedom. Mary decided she could do almost anything here, and nobody would care. And she did not know what to make of this behavior, but she never gave up on them, for they were tolerant and kind.

While at his house, she tried to live what JESUS taught. She didn't exploit the workers, but paid them fairly for their work and refused to ask them to do more than the occasional amount of work. For she was busy, and had no time to constantly take baths, and no need for a house to be overly clean. Yet they did it anyway. She told them a parable, "My master said that we must be ready to serve and keep watchful. They are to be like servants waiting for their master to return from a wedding banquet, so that when he comes and knocks they can immediately open the door for him. For they do not want to find him catch them unaware, and be punished for their action. Even so, my master gave a new model for the relationship between a master and a servant." And they begged her to teach her, so she said, "I have seen that you do good work. Sit for dinner." And she cooked them a meal of bread and salad and stewed some meat. It wasn't exceptional like she had tasted from them, but it was comfort food. And then she instructed them to strip naked and get into the bath. Now there were four female

[975] Modern day Marseilles. Its name means "spring."

servants and two male servants, and Mary washed each of their bodies. And some of them (of both sexes) wanted to make love to her, but she refused. For she said, "In this life, there is love and there is sexual pleasure, and you can do anything, though not everything is good for you. But you must listen, I was once possessed by many demons, and one among them made me do acts of prostitution, for I was driven by lust. I now want to be driven by GOD's love through Christ JESUS." And Mary's attractiveness and her kindness was a thorn in her side. It was well that Peter made the decision to conceal how pretty she was. For she was struggling against such desires. Yet she remained faithful to JESUS and focused on her mission. And the servants treated her well for they loved her, but they no longer treated her with lust.

CHAPTER 5

The governor that went to visit Peter found the boat trip to be much rougher than expected. It rained heavily, the lightning struck near the water, and the waves pitched back and forth. And his pregnant wife went into labor. But the ship was too rough to be expected to deliver a baby, so they stopped on an island. And he delivered her child, but she was too tired and weak to endure the delivery, and she died. The child was born alive, but he had no way to take care of the kid, so he left the child on the island.

When he came to shore and searched for Peter, he asked him, "I asked the disciple known as Mary Magdalene to give me a child, and she prayed for my wife to have one. And a storm came up when I came to visit you, and the mother was lost. And the baby will die also, because it has no milk. Surely, GOD performs miracles. But what manner of GOD also allows such horrible things to happen?" But Peter shook his head, "One of our prophets named Isaiah said that the LORD makes both good and evil. These things are there not because GOD is overpowered but because misfortune is also part of GOD's plan. Go, return the island, and take your wife and child with you, and return to your home." And the man grumbled at this teaching, but he had faith in Peter's words from what he had already seen JESUS perform through Mary. So he returned to the island, and he was shocked to discover the little boy suckling milk from his dead mother. So the man took his wife and child with him on the boat.

Now Mary had said what she needed to the people in the town, and was more than read to leave. But JESUS appeared to her and said, "Tomorrow, you must visit the shore, and wait all day. You will meet two boats." And here she discovered two boats. The first was Veronica, who had rent a rowboat, and spent the entire time looking up and down the coast for Mary. And the two met, and embraced one another, for they had not seen each other in many weeks. And the second time, the governor exited the ship with his wife and child, and he had an angry look on his face. And despite Peter's words, he couldn't forgive GOD. "What is your wife's name?" Mary asked. And the governor told her she was was named Renee,[976] which was a cruel joke, because she was dead. But Mary Magdalene said, "She is not dead, but sleeping. ***Renee, arise to life again.***" And the LORD brought her to life once more that very minute.

CHAPTER 6

Mary and Veronica traveled together as though husband and wife throughout the land of Gaul. And though they loved the LORD with all their heart and soul, they also came to be close through their travels together. It did not matter that the two of them could not have children, for they were committed to their mission, and not to their desires. And Mary wished to one day have a family like she was pretending, and she was troubled by the struggle between a desire for righteousness and her other desires. Yet Veronica provided closeness without the burden of anything more serious.

The next town was known as Lugdunum,[977] and it was a town known for its tranquil atmosphere. The people were not hostile to the message of the two of them, but they appeared more interested in farming. It was a land set aside for retired soldiers, so while they technically were able to convert some of the people away from worship of the gods, it didn't seem to make an impact now. Still, she would plant the seeds for later growth in Christ.[978]

---

[976] Renee means "born again."

[977] Modern day Lyon. This is also where Tiberius Caesar minted the coin that JESUS was tested on where to pay taxes or not with.

[978] Lyon did later become Christianized.

From there, they made their way to Lutetia,[979] and there they met with great success spreading the Gospel. In years to come, an impressive church would be built in this city. After that, they met with less success.

In a town known as Augusta Viromandorum, it was discovered that they were not husband and wife when Mary needed to use the bath and one of the villagers saw her. Now the people of this town were like Jews, they were morally righteous yet lacking in mercy. They accused Mary and Veronica, "These two have traded natural desires for wicked and immoral sexual practices!" Now the two had done nothing of the sort, yet they were powerless to persuade the crowd. And the group wanted to kill them, but they asked if they could leave the town instead, and the crowd agreed.

Mary also came to a town named Glanum. She and Veronica tried to share the Gospel with them, but if the other town was too moral, this town was filled with awful people. And the men there harassed Veronica, and when Mary tried to protect her, they ripped her robes. The men in this town, seeing a beautiful woman dressed as a boy, proceeded to rape her, and then humiliated her. They bound her arms and led her naked around town for the public to laugh at. After this, Mary collected her clothing and left town. And she returned to the coast where she found a cave to hide in.

CHAPTER 7

Mary told Veronica to return to Israel without her. And Veronica was sad for her, but she understood. And she stayed went into the cave when she was in her thirties, and stayed for the next thirty years. Now, Mary wanted to retire from her ministry, but Christ would not let her shut herself off from the world. Even though she was not going out to minister, people had heard that there was a wise person in the cave near the coast, and people would visit her to ask her questions. Some were friendly and wished to know more about JESUS, while others wished to test her. Even so, she welcomed their company, for in her heart she knew that she missed walking freely among people, and she wished that she was still doing mission work.[980]

One day, when she was no longer young and beautiful, and rain storm sprayed water in a pool. And she went out to get a drink of water, and saw herself in reflection. Then the reflection wavered, and she saw JESUS's face. "Mary, Mary," he said, "Never forget that I have chosen you. Do not be afraid. Return to the places that have rejected you, and I will deal with them as they deal with you now."

So she returned to Augusta Viromandorum. Now that she was older and no longer traveling with another woman, they agreed to listen, and she told them of JESUS's message of grace and how he died for us on the cross. And the people of the town asked forgiveness for their actions in the past. As for Glanum, they were still as bad as she remembered, but she was no longer afraid of them. They tried to throw spears at her, but the LORD caused them to fall short. To this day, there is a sculpture there of a woman sitting on a pile of weapons. And she tried again and again to reach them, but they refused to listen. So she told them, "If you will not listen to me while I am alive, perhaps you should put me to death." And they quickly agreed with this suggestion, and allowed her to choose the method that she would die. So it was that Mary was crucified, like her LORD before her. They stripped her naked, but she no more had anything to be humiliated about, so when her hands and feet were pierced, she bore it as an example of Christ's love. Then she breathed her last. But this town largely refused to listen, and a few hundred years later, the city was completely destroyed, leaving only old monuments of Roman culture. A town was built to the north, but never again would this land be inhabited.

LETTERS

ROMANS

Paul wrote to the Romans. Unlike some other churches, Paul never visited the church in Rome. Even so, he understood that they also needed hope and the message of salvation. This salvation, he said, was for both the Greeks and the Jews. Next he assures the Romans that "the righteous live by faith."[981]

---

[979] This is the town of Paris, as it was originally named. The church in question is Notre Dame.

[980] Mary Magdalene's story is basically mine. I've gotten beaten up enough times that the world has me shell-shocked. I occasionally go out, but tend not to go too far.

[981] Martin Luther lived in fear his entire life of eternal damnation. Unlike many people who believe they are basically good, Luther believed he was wicked. Like Paul, he spent enormous amounts of energy trying to earn righteousness. But no matter

Paul next talks about how the creation is evidence of the Creator, and thus all those who see the creation and do not believe are making excuses, because they understood that GOD is there, they through their "wisdom" and craftiness, instead turned to foolishness, and followed all sorts of idols and falsehood. All because they worshiped the creation, not GOD the Creator. By exchanging the truth that is GOD for the lie of a world without them, they instead abandoned themselves to all sorts of impure actions and relationships. They have been taught that Christ has died for their sins, but have missed the mark, choosing to find sins worthy for him to condemn them. They have become slaves to their lusts and addictions. The pews of the temple are stained from the juices from their bodies, the women do things in pews that let's be honest[982] are probably not able to be discussed openly. In private, such things might be acceptable, but they have forgotten Christ to worship their urges. If Christ died for us, but we do not behave as one changed by it, all things would be acceptable, whether slander or envy or greed, even to the point that murder is excused. More importantly, they try to convince others they are without sin and approve of others who do the same. They have declared good as evil, and sin as righteousness.[983] And they teach others and approve of others who practice such things. And when the LORD allows the consequences of their sin to punish them, they fall to two extremes, either to turn away and believe Christ has not died for them (or even does not exist) and anything is permissable, or they suffer under the law and never fulfill its standards.

But those who pass judgement are also without excuse, for their judgement itself is a sin, and should invite punishment by storing up judgemental ideas. Whatever you invite in this world, good or bad, invites more of the same. If you invite love and goodness, goodness and love comes to you, but the reverse is also true. This is because GOD is impartial. This is not to say that GOD enjoys judgement or delights in the idea of eternal torment. Rather correction, not perfection, is the goal.

He explains about the hypocrisy of boasting, trying to preach against actions that you yourself are guilty of, such as theft or adultery. If you were a doer of the law, but do not practice what you preach, it is though your circumcision has been undone, he says. The circumcision, then, is not a physical cutting of the flesh as in the Old Testament, but a spiritual setting apart. This isn't to be morally superior, though. Rather than following the letter of the law, this is a repairing of the relationship with GOD and other people.

Paul assures his readers that even if someone were without faith, GOD is faithful to us. And any humans who say otherwise are lying.

Paul explains about the Gospel, and what its purpose is. Essentially, if we were looking for a set of laws to make us right with things and to go to Heaven we are out of luck. But this is actually the good news. While there are a set of laws (the Jewish law, for example), every one of us has fallen short of those laws. In fact, even if we were to use a different religion's laws, or a secular set of laws (such as be kind to the planet, and don't get pregnant because overpopulation is bad), we will inevitably fail. Paul picks apart the idea though that our unrighteousness brings out GOD's righteousness, saying that a person who says "Let us do evil that good may result," is rightly condemned.

It is only through JESUS (this is not to say some magical action of confessing JESUS as "LORD", as some Evangelicals seem to think, but through his redeeming blood on the cross) is our salvation. All the same, we have no right to boast, as the same could be said of anyone. Or as Paul says, "For we maintain that one is justified by faith apart from the works of the law. Or is GOD for Jews only? Is he not the GOD of the non-Jews also? Yes, of the non-Jews also, since indeed there is one GOD who will justify the circumcised by faith, and the uncircumcised through faith. Do we then nullify the law through faith? Absolutely not. No, we establish the law."[984]

Paul then asks how Abraham, who came both before the law and faith in JESUS could be saved. He says that for one who works, faith seems like an obligation, but that faith itself (apart from works) is counted as righteousness, because Abraham was called righteous before even he received

---

his efforts, he continued to see visions of damnation, until the day that he read this passage. It was an epiphany to him, and he latched upon the idea that salvation is through grace by faith.

[982] It's a pun. Let's be honest = lesbianous.

[983] I think of social justice warriors here. Our sins are sins for "if we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves." But our sins are also forgiven.

[984] JESUS came not to abolish the law, but to fulfill it. Therefore, even though judgement exists, we do not have to fear judgement.

circumcision. More importantly, he was nearly dead from old age, and his wife's womb was dead, yet GOD called him righteous. And Paul says in the same way we, even before having done works, are considered righteous for our belief in JESUS. In this way, we have made peace with GOD through our faith in JESUS Christ, and also access by faith into grace, that we rejoice in hope of the glory of GOD. Paul says that none of us can boast that we are justified, as"There is no one righteous, not even one " and "all have fallen short." This actually is a good thing, because if none of us can be considered worthy before GOD, then the most hopeless sinner can take great comfort that Christ died on his behalf. Paul asks, what is the worth of the added burden of being a follower of Christ then? Paul tells that we can also rejoice in the fact that we suffer, because suffering brings perseverance and this in turn builds character[985] which in turn builds hope. And hope does not disappoint us, because GOD'S love has been poured out into our hearts through the *Ruach ha Kodesh* who was given to us. While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Rarely does someone die for those considered righteous, but for a good person, someone might die, because of their kindness. But Christ died for us while we were still wicked wretches.

Paul then compares serving sin to slavery. You can either be a slave to sin, or you can work for GOD, because he contends that none of us are free while we live in this world, but we serve someone. He explains, "For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of GOD is everlasting life in Christ JESUS our DEAREST."

Paul then compares Adam to JESUS, telling about how Adam brought sin, but JESUS brought grace from sins. He then asks rhetorically if grace then is license to continue sinning, as grace is a free gift of forgiveness of sins. But as Christ died for our sins, this is like mistreating a gift[986] and that we are considered united to Christ and our old self has been crucified with him, freed from sin through death into new life. We are not to offer ourselves to sin but to GOD, for we are not under the law but under grace. And he talks about how the law itself creates trespass but as trespass increases, grace also increases. But should we go on sinning so grace increases? No, that's not the point either. Rather, we should consider those who are dead as freed from sin, and we are dead to sin, living not under the law but under grace, "For we know that since Christ was raised from the dead, he cannot die again; death no longer has mastery over him. The death he died, he died to sin once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to GOD." Therefore, Christ paid the price for our sin.

Paul explains using marriage that the law according to a person only lasts as long as they live. For example, if a man marries a woman, and she has sex with another man, she is an adulteress. But once he dies, she is free to remarry. In the same way, we have been release from the law, having died with Christ to our old selves. He then asks rhetorically if law itself is sin. The answer there is also no, but he does say that he would never have known what sin was without learning law. Paul explains that he wants to do right by the law but his wicked nature is at war with the law, constantly doing what he does not want to do, following the law of the base desires of his flesh instead. He then says that it is impossible for flesh to please GOD, but we are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, and so the *Ruach ha Kodesh* dwells in us. As such, there is no condemnation because through JESUS you have been set free by sin offering. Since he condemned sin in his flesh, the righteous requirement of the law has been met. And since Christ raised from the dead, and his spirit lives in us, he gives life to our mortal bodies. He next tells us that there is indeed present suffering, but this is part of our future glory. And the *Ruach ha Kodesh* helps us in our weakness, and destines us as called to be chosen.[987]

He then tells us, "What then are we to say about these things? If GOD is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how would he not also with him freely give us all things? Who could bring a charge against GOD'S chosen ones? It is GOD who justifies. Who is the one who condemns? It is Christ who died, and more than that, who was raised, who is at the right hand of GOD, who also makes intercession for us. Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Could oppression, or anguish, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? Even as it is written, 'For your sake we are killed all day long. We were regarded as sheep to be

---

[985] I'm reminded of the dad in *Calvin and Hobbes*, who always talks about suffering and character.

[986] This is not to say we are condemned if we slip up, but that the point is appreciation for this gift.

[987] Calvinism likes to stretch this destiny thing to its limit. But all of us are destined for salvation, though not all of us accept GOD's love or understand it. That's okay.

slaughtered.' No! In all these things, we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of GOD, which is in Christ JESUS our DEAREST."[988]

Paul talks about how GOD's grace then does not depend on human effort, but on his mercy. He talks about how the Gentiles have attained salvation, but the Jews who live by the law are still struggling, since they pursued it not by faith but as if by works, and it became a stumbling block to them. There are those who have a desire for GOD but lack knowledge, and how they try to establish their own righteousness through deeds, but he says that far more important is to confess that JESUS is our Savior, and to believe in your heart that Christ raised from the dead. What the heart believes results in righteousness, and what the mouth proclaims results in salvation. Since the Jews still try to establish righteousness through deeds and not by either of those things, Paul asks if the Jews are rejected. But he answers in the negative. Paul notes that he is still an Israelite, of the tribe of Benjamin.[989] Paul mentions that the gifts of God irrevocable, and that just as you (the Christians) were once disobedient but have now received mercy because of their (the Jews) disobedience, so also others who have disobedient will receive mercy because of the mercy shown to you. For he says, "God has imprisoned all to disobedience so that he may be merciful to all," confirming universal salvation. He uses Elijah as an example, talking about how Elijah complained that everyone turned to evil and he was all alone. But GOD told him that was nonsense, and that he had kept seven thousand people who did not bow to Baal. Paul says in much the same way, he chooses through grace. If grace is composed of works, then it is no longer grace. Paul says (which the earlier passage seems to disagree with, mentioning irrevocable things) that Israel's efforts to earn grace invalidated their grace, but that chosen ones obtained grace while the rest hardened their hearts. "GOD gave them a spirit of stupor, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear, to this very day." And also, "By their fall, salvation has come to the non-Jews, to provoke them to jealousy." He compares this process to the grafting of olive trees. That is, righteousness came from the Jews who were chosen and followed the law, but the Gentiles are branches grafted from the roots of this chosen people. They should not boast then, because the roots of Jewish faith support their grace. In the same way, the unity of the kingdom of JESUS is grafted into this separate and broken world, so the penalty of death is redeemed. Christians are like a wild olives whose branch was grafted onto the roots of a good olive tree, and Paul says if this is so, how much more will the Jews who are the natural branches be grafted into faith in JESUS?[990] In this way, all Jews will be saved, he says. He quotes prophecy, "There will come out of Zion the Deliverer; he will turn away ungodliness from Jacob. This is my covenant to them, when I will take away their sins." He then explains that the Jews are a weird mix of enemies and friends, since they (currently) reject the Good News, yet are also elect before GOD.

Paul talks about offering a living sacrifice of our lives to GOD, effectively through our lives showing GOD's will. He says we are many members of one body, having different gifts to give. He tells believes to have love without hypocrisy, and that the world seeks to transform us by dragging us down to its evil, but rather than being overcome by evil, we overcome evil with good. He instructs people to rejoice with those rejoice, weep with those who weep, bless those who persecute them, to associate with the humble and not be arrogant, and that and that if their enemy is hungry or thirsty, help them out.

Paul then says that every person should be subject to governing authorities, because there is no authority except from GOD, and those that exist are appointed by GOD. By this logic, anyone who rejects authority in turn rejects the appointment of leaders by GOD and are thus open to being judged. "For rulers are not a terror to the good work, but to the evil."[991] He then supports the paying of taxes.

---

[988] The "for GOD so loved the world" passage just before is often cited as the best passage of the New Testament, but actually this is, for it assures us that no action we do, only GOD himself, can take us away from GOD. And I do not believe GOD would do that.

[989] In Judges, the tribe of Benjamin was considered the lowest, having done abominable things. But here he sets them as a remnant.

[990] This has already happened to some extent with Messianic Jewish movements, though some Jews resist this because they feel their Jewish identity is more important. Apparently, they think getting to personally know GOD is less important than keeping traditions and rules. Hmph.

[991] This passage has been used to justify blind obedience to the state. I am fairly certain that such blind obedience to the likes of

He says to owe no one anything, except to love one another; because anyone who loves another fulfills the law.
Paul talks about how weak-faithed people eat vegetables.[992] But he says those who eat all things shouldn't judge one that doesn't, as we are all GOD's servants. None of us lives or dies outside other people, so we shouldn't be judging the righteousness of others. He closes the letter by telling them to greet each other with a kiss, and be on the look out for those causing divisions and stumbling among the congregation,[993] wishing grace to the people of Rome, and glory to GOD. He also states that he hopes to visit this church in Rome.

CORINTHIANS

Paul wrote to the Corintians.[994] Unlike his letter to the Romans, he was familiar with the Corinthians, having spend eighteen months in Corinth. He wrote this letter in response to reports of quarreling in Corinth, so this isn't a typical greeting letter. After his greeting, he asks that there be no divisions among them in Christ, then gets right to the report of fighting among them. He says that people who behave as though you can say that you follow Paul, Christ, Apollos, or Peter are behaving as though JESUS'S message is divided. He asks them, "Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized into the name of Paul?" then he thanks GOD that he didn't baptize any of them (except Crispus and Gaius) so that none of them can say they were baptized by him. The cross, he says, appears foolish to those who do not believe in JESUS, because Jews ask for signs, and the Greeks seek after wisdom. Christ crucified is a message that is a stumbling block[995] to the Jews and foolish to non-Jews. But to those called by GOD to follow, Christ is the power and wisdom of GOD. So he tells them not to boast in themselves or their teacher, but to boast in GOD.
Paul explains that for the most part knowledge of GOD is a mystery, that "no eye has seen, and no ear has heard, and no mind has imagined the things which GOD has prepared for those who love him" and that nobody knows what GOD plans but the spirit of GOD, the *Ruach ha Kodesh*. But we do however know the mind of Christ.
Paul then compares the limited spiritual knowledge he gave to the milk given to infants, effectively restating the idea that they should be boastful. He tells them that even now they aren't ready, as they still think in terms of their human standards and desires. He then compares his own and Apollos's work to the watering of a garden, saying that ultimately it was GOD that made it grow. This is why they shouldn't be arguing about who taught them. He then compares their religious background to the foundation of a buildiing, and that nobody should build using any foundation other than what was laid (JESUS). But if they do, GOD will test by fire what sort of work it is, and his reward is based on what remains. Paul says that our body is a temple to to GOD, where the *Ruach ha Kodesh* dwells, and that a person who destroys a temple is under condemnation. In other words, they are a murderer. Paul then says not to judge, since GOD will ultimately reveal what is in people's hearts and their dark things, then each will get praise from GOD.
Paul then mentions that among other complaints, he has heard talk of sexual immorality, of a person sleeping with his father's wife.[996] He calls them puffed up, that they did not feel like they had sinned. He compares their boasting in the face of this sin to leaven ruining a batch of unleavened dough,

---

Adolf Hitler, Joseph Stalin, or the Kim Jung family would not be Christian by any stretch of the imagination. There is also a difference between tithe taxes and rapacious taking of earnings. This is also assuming the just granting of rulership. Are those still apointed by GOD who seized power through deceit or assassination? Or are they rightly to be perceived as those who disobeyed GOD to take for themselves? Such ambitious leaders almost always rule unjustly. I'm not sure, but I do not think this is the same as GOD appointing them. Paul is being idealistic.

[992] I found this funny, so I included it. I can just see vegans in PETA being declared faithless. But basically, the context is that faith in JESUS assures us that the dietary laws of kosher are secondary to JESUS declaring all food unclean. The thing is, this is kinda fixating on the things of the physical world. I can't see how this matters.

[993] At this time, there were a number of false doctrines of Christianity, chief among those were the Judaizers, which taught the law instead of Christianity.

[994] This is apparently not the first letter he wrote, but the other ones haven't survived.

[995] "The stone that the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone."

[996] Personally, I am not convinced that the law of Moses is GOD's law. Moses received the Ten Commandments from GOD, it is true. And according to those laws, it is still adultery, however, even if we want to say that incest was something Moses thought improper. I am not sure how much GOD cares about what happens in our bedroom, but the fact still remains that the people of Corinth are acting in ways that are spiritually immature.

reminded them that Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us.[997] He also talks with them about their disputes with each other in what appear to be lawsuits. In particular, what he has issues with is using the secular courts to do so, seeing church issues as church business, and not the business of those without standing in the church. If the church behaves like the secular world, engaging in petty arguments and bringing trouble against each other, then it has lost against the world. The church is bringing wrong before its brothers and trying to cheat or harm each other.

Paul then explains, "Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the Kingdom of GOD? Do not be deceived. Neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor men who have sexual relations with men, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor slanderers, nor swindlers, will inherit the Kingdom of GOD.[998] Such were some of you, but you were washed. But you were sanctified. But you were justified in the name of JESUS Christ, and in the Spirit of our GOD." He then discusses the mindset that everything is lawful or permissible. Not everything which is lawful is good for you, and some things that are lawful lead one to be under the power of something, whether from addiction, idolatry, or some other attachment. He talks about how we eat food, but we shouldn't give our self to gluttony, as both food and the body are part of the physical world not the spiritual. Likewise, members of Christ shouldn't give themselves over to prostitutes as "The two will become one flesh" but he who is joined to GOD is one spirit. He then tells them to flee from sexual immorality. If the body is a temple, that temple was bought with a price, so we should glorify GOD using our body.

Paul then talks on whether it is good then for a man to touch a woman, and he kind of waffles back and forth. Yes, each man should have his own wife, but some people are unmarried or widows, that's good too. Then he says that a wife does not have authority over her body, but her husband. I would be tempted to think major sexism here, except he then reverses the statement, saying that a husband's body is the wife's property also. Basically, he is saying that whether single or married, you stick with your decision, and nobody should leave their spouse because of some notion that GOD disapproves, even if your partner is not a believer.

Paul then talks about eating food sacrificed to idols and the whole idea that your sins are forgiven doesn't mean that you should cause others to sin. He talks about how he tried to be all things to all people, being a Jew to Jews and so on. He then compares the Gospel to running a race, only instead of a corruptible trophy, what we seek is eternal. Ironically, after saying that, Paul returns to earthly things like rules about food sacrificed to idols, sexual immorality, and idolatry. GOD and I know these idols are not real. Giving them presence in your mind is idolatry enough. But I digress. Paul tells us that no temptation will be allowed to you beyond what you are able to deal with and will always provide a means of escape that you are able to endure it. The same is true of trials, GOD does not give trials beyond what we can handle. Paul explains that the cup and the bread are a sharing of the body of Christ. Because there is one loaf, we who are many are one body.

Paul says to be imitators of Christ. Apparently, he didn't get the memo when Christ declared all foods clean, and warned against adherence to manmade traditions, as next he talks about how women should have their heads covered and their faces should be veiled[999] and men should not be veiled or have long hair. If we are to imitate Christ, we need to remember that following GOD is about loving justice and mercy, not following of senseless rules that produce hardship. If a woman cannot even walk outside or worship without a veil, how much of a hardship is it if the weather is unsuitable for such a thing? In the same way, rules about the Sabbath or about cleanliness are a hardship. GOD is with us. He does not require accessories, he wants our hearts to choose him. JESUS spoke about

---

[997] This continues, but it appears to be about rejecting people who are not part of the church, such as drunkards, swindlers, sexual sinners, etc. The problem is not only does this create a mixed message of forgiving only those part of the church, and not extending mercy to outsiders, but it appears to contradict the next chapter. This particular passage is occasionally sung.

[998] This is often used to justify mistreatment of homosexuals when the Old Testament isn't used, claiming that GOD condemns homosexual behavior. But what this passage tells us is that some of the people in church used to have these problems (some had other problems like hypocrisy and the tendency to condemn others), but even though this is a sin, our sins are forgiven. Everything is now allowed, but not everything is good for you. For example, certain sex may give you diseases, even though JESUS doesn't condemn you about it. Likewise, you can eat pork, but it may give you worms.

[999] To me, this sort of nonsense was what birthed some of the hijab nonsense in Islam. This teaching led the widespread oppression of women, where women cannot go outside uncovered in Muslim countries.

observing lesser laws and ignoring the weightier matters. You ought to imitate that.[1000]
Paul next explains that there are many kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit that grants them.[1001] And there are many kinds of service, but the same GOD. And there are many kinds of miracles, but the same GOD who works all of them. He explains different types of gifts: healing, tongues, interpretation of tongues, working of miracles, wisdom or knowledge, prophecy, discerning spirits.[1002] But he tells us that the same Spirit distributes each one to people as desired. He also mentions that speaking in tongues is no good if one is not understood. In much the same way, if the Bible uses unclear language, those who read it are confused rather than helped.
Paul then says that the people of GOD are the Body of Christ, and that neither can one part of the body say it is better than the others and that they are nonessential[1003] nor can a body part decide that it's only a pathetic organ and doesn't deserve to be part of the Body. He tells them that if all the body were a single organ, it would be missing all the other parts that make things work. Because of this, there should not be divisions in the Body of Christ either. All are not teachers, nor prophets, nor speakers of tongues, nor interpreters, nor miracle workers. And there is a greater thing that any of these gifts.
Paul then talks about love.[1004] This is among his best speeches, so I will quote, "If I speak with the tongues of humans and of angels, but do not have love, I have become a clanging cymbal. If I have the gift of prophecy, and know all mysteries and have all faith, so as to move mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. If I dole out all my goods to feed the poor, and if I surrender my body but do not do so for love, it profits me nothing. Love is patient and is kind, love does not envy, love does not brag, is not proud, does not behave itself inappropriately, does not seek its own way, is not irritable, does not keep a record of wrongs. Love does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will be done away with. Where there are tongues, they will cease. Where there is knowledge, it will be done away with. For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is complete has come, that which is partial will be done away with. When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I felt as a child, I thought as a child. Now that I have become an adult, I have put away childish things. For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then we will see you face to face. Now I know in part, but then I will know fully, even as I was also fully known. But now faith, hope, and love remain. The greatest of these is love." Paul then instructs them to follow after love and to desire spiritual things.
He then talks about how speaking in tongues is meaningless if people can't understand you.[1005] He then says that prophecy is better than speaking in tongues, contradicting what he said earlier about no parts of the Body of Christ being any better. More importantly, prophecy that is unclear is no better than nonsense tongues. Paul then brags (as he sometimes does) about how he speaks in tongues better than most. But Paul says that GOD is not a GOD of confusion but of peace. If this is true, then any prophecies that are not understood cannot be of GOD, but are devised by man. He then talks about how he thinks women should keep quiet in the churches and be in subjection to their husbands, because he thinks it's shameful for women to chatter in the church.[1006]

[1000] Some people claim Paul deviated from the Gospel when he taught about grace, but I think he deviates in situations where he forgets about it to teach senseless laws.
[1001] The *Ruach ha Kodesh*, or Holy Spirit.
[1002] Sometimes this is viewed as if it's the only gifts that can be given, and if you have something else, it must be from someone other than GOD. This is not all-inclusive though.
[1003] It's important to address just how ungodly the COVID language was. Calling people nonessential is a pretty good way to get your society to collapse.
[1004] Sometimes called "charity", but this is a gross mistranslation. Charity is a thing you do for others, as with altruism. Ayn Rand once mentioned that without the free choice to do for others, there really isn't any love, only begrudging obligation. So let's put the word "love" back where it belongs.
[1005] In Pentecostal churches, they sometimes do the speaking in tongues thing, but that's just gibberish. What the Bible means by speaking in tongues is the gift of language, not some playing around with baby talk words.
[1006] Once again, this is Paul trying to make laws that aren't the commandments of GOD. The church is under attack today, because the woke left thinks these things should be allowed (and more), and the traditionalists think they need to die on the battlefield of not letting women preach. No, indeed let anyone who is called by GOD preach the word of GOD. But the word of GOD is the word of GOD, not the woke social justice message of socialism.

Paul then talks about the Gospel, that JESUS died for our sins, that he was raised in three days, that he appeared to Peter and the twelve disciples, that he appeared to five hundred followers, James and all apostles, and lastly to Paul himself on the road to Damascus. Paul calls himself the least of the apostles, because originally he persecuted the church. Paul says that if the Gospel says that Christ is raised, they cannot believe as the Sadducees do, that there is no resurrection. In fact, if Christ has not raised, everything including forgiveness of sins falls apart. I believe the life and death of GOD was to show us that GOD is with us, that it is a demonstration offering for our sins. That is, our sins were possibly always forgiven, but we needed to understand that this was the case, because we thought we were saved according to the law. Nevertheless, I still believe Christ did die for our sins, and there has been a resurrection.

Paul mentions end times, but and that JESUS will eventually slay all enemies (including death), but I have no use for apocalypses. I scrubbed a great deal of this from my summary. He then talks about how bad company corrupts good morals, a teaching that shows that Paul only sort of knew JESUS, as JESUS hung around sinners, as were many of the early Christians. He ends the passage by telling them to be sober, and to know their labor is not in vain.

GALATIANS

Paul wrote to the Galatians after hearing reports backs that some of them had chosen to abandon the Gospel for a different "good news." He explains that even if an angel from Heaven were to come and proclaim a "good news" other than what they have heard, let him be cursed.[1007] He repeats this curse. So what is this false good news? Well, it's the gospel of the Judaizers. He talks about how the Gospel (unlike the Bible which is a written work, to the dismay of those trying to edit it for coherence) is not of human origin, for the Gospel is the Word of GOD. And the Word of GOD is JESUS. This is correct, whether someone makes errors in translation or leaves something out, nothing will change the fact that Christ died on the cross for our sins, and not for ours only, but for the sins of the whole world. But he does not say this. Instead, he claims with pride that the Gospel was given to him directly by Christ. He then tells the history of his conversion. After this, he talks about how false believers infiltrated their ranks and taught a gospel intended to make them slaves (that is, a gospel of circumcision and good works). He talks about his mission going to preach among the Gentiles, and how he witnessed Peter at one point being a hypocrite. He would only eat with the circumcised, and separated himself from the uncircumcised.[1008] In response, he told the group that by behaving as though there was a separation, he was acting like Christ promotes sin. Paul then said that he had been crucified with Christ, so it is not him that lives but Christ living in him. Paul said that if righteousness could be found in the law, then Christ died for nothing.[1009]

Paul accuses the Galatians of turning away from spiritual things to pursue things of the flesh. Paul talks about Abraham believing GOD and having it counted as righteousness. He then explains the purpose of the law. He compares the law to the curse, saying, "Cursed is everyone who does not continue in all things that are written in the book of the law, to do them." He explains that that law is not of faith, but that those who follow the law will live by it. In other words, that we know about the law, we are cursed to be judged by its standard, and its standard is impossible to follow. There are over six hundred laws, some of which are contradictory or prevent other laws from being followed. He says that Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law, by becoming a curse for us. It is written, "Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree," so JESUS bore this curse so that the blessing of Abraham could come to Jews and Gentiles. He explains that the law of JESUS did not cancel the previous law of Moses or its promise. He asks rhetorically whether the law is against the promises of GOD but answers in the negative. If there had been a law given which could give life, then certainly

---

[1007] This is why I disagree with the Second Coming, since all the Mark of the Beast stuff is based on a gospel of works. Life is not about doing works but following after grace. Romans warns us against a works gospel, and here it is called a curse.

[1008] It's important to get context when people talk about how the church is filled with hypocrites. Yes, it is. The church is housed with flawed people, and one flaw is hypocrisy.

[1009] This is basically the case for what I am doing. There are New and Old Testament sections that basically repeat the notion best told in Pollyanna. "Death comes unexpectedly!" complete with words about eternal damnation or torment. But if we try to avoid this through the law, nothing we do is good enough. It is through grace that we are saved, so I expunged passages about works. Works give merit and virtue, but not salvation.

righteousness would have been of the law. But he says that the scriptures put everything under sin, so faith in JESUS could be given. He compares the law to a tutor given to us until JESUS came. The law still exists, but we now have faith in JESUS. Because of this gift, there is no longer a real distinction between Jew and Greek, nor slave or free, nor even male or female. All are one in JESUS and if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring and heirs according to his promise. But he warns them that although Christ made them free, they should not be enslaved again. Paul says that receiving circumcision is like living under the whole Jewish law. This is the problem of the Judaizers.
But he says in warning about the Judaizers, "It is for freedom that Christ has set us free! Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery." Regardless of the rules made by these people, Christ has removed our chains, and we are no longer slaves. So those who try to bind us in the old laws are attempting to enslave us once more!
The whole law is fulfilled in one word, in this: "You are to love your neighbor as yourself." If you live under the Spirit, you have fulfilled the law. He distinguishes the works of the flesh from the fruits of the Spirit. The flesh dwells on things, and is thus led to actions like idolatry, sexual immorality, various heresies and divisions, and fighting among others, particularly about what one has.[1010] In contrast, the fruits of the Spirit are love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against such things. Paul says that even if someone we know is caught in some sort of sin, part of these fruits is showing them gentleness. He says that a new creation, not circumcision, is now the standard of a follower. We should live like better people, not as hypocrites who judge others according to laws, but that we are to bear each other's burdens. But he warns about arrogance, telling each person to test their work before boasting about it. In this way, we should not be weary of doing good. And if we must boast, we should boast about JESUS.

COLOSSIANS

Paul addresses the Colossians, mentioning in his introduction that JESUS is the head of the body, the church, and the firstborn of all creation.[1011] The purpose of this book is mainly to warn against wrong or false doctrines. So from the first, they need to be rooted in the teachings of JESUS. He tells them that while they were still dead in their sins, GOD made them alive through Christ, canceling their debt to sin and circumcising them in the teachings of JESUS. Paul tells them they learned of JESUS, and should thus not let anyone judge what they eat or drink, or teach about observes to feast days or Sabbath. These are a shadow of things, whereas Christ is the main part. Paul calls such things puffed up with false humility, and mentions that rules about "do not handle, nor taste, nor touch" are all human commandments made against things that perish with use. If we are worried about the indulgences of the flesh, these laws are as much a part of the flesh as the things they warn against. Despite this, or maybe because of it, they are to adopt a new self, claiming there is no Jew or Greek, as whoever they were before is secondary to being followers of Christ. As such, they are to try to rid themselves of anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language, replacing such things with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience.
He also tells them, "Wives, be in subjection to your husbands, as is fitting in GOD. Husbands, love your wives, and do not be bitter against them, for this pleases GOD. Children, obey your parents in all things. Parents, do not provoke your children, so that they won't be discouraged. Workers,[1012] obey those who are your masters according to the flesh, not just when they are looking, as people-pleasers, but in singleness of heart, fearing GOD. And whatever you do, work heartily, as for the LORD, and not for people. Masters, give to your workers that which is just and equal, knowing that you also have a DEAREST in Heaven."
Then he tells them to be watchful and faithful. Paul also mentions that he is sending his servant Onesimus, and sends his greetings.

[1010] As I've mentioned before, fixation on these things is often also the thing itself. That is, if you get hung up on the fact that you looked too long at a statue or other object, you are letting your concern about committing idolatry *itself* be idolatry. The more something occupies your mind, the more you make an idol of it. Your first priority then, is not avoiding sin, but keeping JESUS first in your heart.
[1011] This is a good reason why I reject the Catholic concept of Pope. It is GOD who is head of the Church. Not the Pope.
[1012] This was originally "servants" or "slaves" but I thought it carried too much baggage of the Civil War, especially since that passage was later used to justify slavery, out of context with the part about fair wages.

MANUMISSION OF ONESIMUS

Paul, upon receiving a slave of a man named Philemon, wrote the following to his original master.

Paul, a prisoner of Christ, and Timothy our brother, to Philemon, our beloved fellow worker,[1013] *and to Apphia our sister, to Archippus, our fellow soldier, and to the church in your house. Grace to you and peace from GOD our Father and JESUS Christ. I thank my GOD always, making mention of you in my prayers, hearing of your love, and of the faith which you have toward JESUS, and toward all the saints; that the fellowship of your faith may become effective, in the knowledge of every good thing which is in you in Christ. For I have much joy and comfort in your love, because the hearts of the saints have been refreshed through you, brother.*

Therefore, though I have all boldness in Christ to command you that which is appropriate, yet on the basis of love I rather appeal, being such a one as Paul, the aged, but also a prisoner of Christ. I appeal to you for my child, who I have become the father of in my chains, Onesimus, who once was useless to you, but now is useful[1014] *to you and me.*

I am sending back to you, him who is my very heart, who I desired to keep with me, that on your behalf he might serve me in my chains for the Good News. But I was willing to do nothing without your consent, that your goodness would not be as of necessity, but of free will. For perhaps he was therefore separated from you for a while, that you would have him forever, no longer as a slave, but more than a slave, a beloved brother, especially to me, but how much rather to you, both in the flesh and in GOD.

If then you count me a partner, receive him as you would receive me. But if he has wronged you at all, or owes you anything, put that to my account. I, Paul, write this with my own hand: I will repay it (not to mention to you that you owe to me even your own self [1015] *besides).*

Yes, brother, let me have joy from you in GOD. Refresh my heart in Christ. Having confidence in your obedience, I write to you, knowing that you will do even beyond what I say. Also, prepare a guest room for me, for I hope that through your prayers I will be restored to you. Epaphras, my fellow prisoner in Christ JESUS, greets you, as do Mark, Aristarchus, Demas, and Luke, my fellow workers.

The grace of JESUS Christ be with your spirit.

Onesimus was indeed freed. He later became a bishop in the church in Ephesus.

OTHER LETTERS

Paul and the other disciples wrote many letters which for length or other reasons were merged together as Other Letters. In some cases, they were too short, or maybe too long, or most of what they said, this author doesn't agree is decent canon. Martin Luther asserted *Christus dominus et rex scripturae*[1016], using the following method of deciding whether scripture was justified as canon, "See if they preach Christ or not." He said that whatever was against what JESUS Christ taught would not be justified, even if it claims to be written by Saint Peter or Paul; whatever Christ did teach, that is justified, even if it is written by Judas Iscariot, Pilate, or Herod. With that in mind, I trust his doubts about Hebrews, James, Jude, and Revelation. I don't particularly like Thessalonians, because my objection is not about faith vs works, but the idea of premillenialism and some coming wrath that seems deeply at odds to a GOD whose son forgave even those who sent him to death on the cross. Other texts might be okay, but we will deal with them on a case by case basis, and sometimes by chapter. As to why Martin Luther didn't remove these himself has to do with the idea that he had just put forth the idea of *sola scriptura*, in that we trust the scripture alone, not the Pope. However, having edited the Bible, it is clear that I do not agree with this idea. Canon is not decided by the Pope, nor old dead guys, but whether it follows true Gospel and the words of JESUS. As such, I tried to look at these letters of more mixed value and decided whether to include them at all.

Paul continues in his second letter to the Corinthians about forgiving others (for Peter has forgiven on

---

[1013] Notice the repeated use of words like prisoner or slave, calling to attention the fact that Onesimus is a captured slave.

[1014] Onesimus means "useful."

[1015] It is often accused of the Bible that it supports slavery, usually using passages of the law about runaway slaves or the treatment of slaves, or this passage. However, it is clearly a guilt trip. And it appears to have worked.

[1016] Or "Christ the LORD and King of Scripture", meaning that whatever Christ says is the ultimate decider of scripture, not what we men decide.

our behalf through Christ), that GOD leads us out of captivity in order that we should spread knowledge of Christ and that this new covenant that is shared will be regarded as death by some and life by others.[1017] Paul says that disciples of GOD should not peddle his message for profit, but instead speak about it in sincerity.[1018] He compares the law written in stone that brings the idea of sin is dead, yet is glorious because of GOD; even so, the ministry of JESUS which brings salvation is even more glorious. He talks about how like the veil that Moses put over his face, the Jews effectively have a veil over their minds to keep from understanding. He mentions that in this present time there is suffering, but because of grace there is reason for celebration, so we should fix our eyes not on the visible but the unseen eternal. Paul says that the Gospel is about reconciliation, and talks about our new spiritual body awaiting us. At times, he talks about being ambassadors to the Gospel for the world that lives in material things.[1019] Next, Paul talks about the various hardships he has struggled with (which are largely mentioned in Acts of the Apostles). He warns against idolatry, where I would agree, but add that fixation on avoiding idols is precisely idolatry; that is, you should not only avoid idols, but also ignore them, and teach others not to be distracted by them.[1020] Paul says that because we have received such promises from JESUS, in order to perfect holiness, we should purify ourselves from any contamination of body or spirit. [1021] Paul talks about his experiences in Macedonia and how he was harassed back then but even though he has sorrow, there are no regrets, because he says, "GODly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow brings death." I have no idea what that means. Moving on, Paul says that generosity is well rewarded, comparing it to a crop that it sown and later harvested. He talks about how Christians don't use the weapons of the world, but that their words break down the powers of the world. Then he warns about those false apostles who claim to be exceptional, telling of his own accomplishments: he's a Hebrew, a Jew, a descendant of Abraham, a servant of Christ, and he can even boast about his suffering as a follower of Christ... but the things that show his weakness are more to be boasted about. In fact, he says that in order to keep him from boasting too much, GOD has given him a thorn in his side. And he begged to have it taken away, but he was told, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness."

Paul also writes to the Ephesians, telling them of the rich grace that GOD has given freely through JESUS Christ: forgiveness of sins, redemption through his love, and wisdom that we may know mysteries of his will. He says that when times reach their fulfillment,[1022] all things will be brought in unity to Christ. Paul then says that JESUS was raised from the dead, and all authority was placed under him to make him head of the church.[1023] He tells us that while according to our sins we should be counted as condemned to death by all rights, we are made alive according to Christ. We are saved by grace (not by works, and therefore none of us can boast about our works), and as such are GOD's

---

[1017] The Bible has a strange duality about life and death, where we are told the Tree of Knowledge is "death" and then "life." And JESUS is talking about eternal life when he dies.

[1018] This is a pretty stern condemnation against paid priests. A worker indeed deserves his wages, but I think the idea is that people should spread the Gospel as a hobby. I widely believe that the Catholic church corrupted the true Church by turning it into a bureaucracy.

[1019] There's a general sense here of responsibility with a warning not to take GOD's grace for granted, or else it might be removed or you get cursed. I'm personally not sure such a thing is done, though it is possible to have your head messed up. Demonic influence is a thing that allows people to fall into addictions delusions. I was watching a video about some guy who was warned by his monastery not to go into a life of solitude, he left them and did it anyway, and demonic influence made him think angels were working through him to perform miracles, and he was told to stop praying. He was messed up by the time the brothers from his monastery helped him. As a minister once told me, seeking answers ends in two ways, you find the truth of JESUS or you are lost in madness.

[1020] Muslims build bizarre geometric structures to avoid any real world image, but then they too become idols.

[1021] If this seems like a contradiction of other passages emphasizing GOD's grace and forgiveness, remember the passage about how "you can do anything, but not everything is good for you." Part of the focus here is avoiding addictions and attachments, because the word holy means set aside to GOD. Even so, you should avoid moral perfectionism.

[1022] What I preach I call "unrealized postmillenialism." That is, JESUS has long since returned, but the world is like a loaf that is being leavened. The kingdom of GOD works on the world a bit at a time through joys and hardships, showing the world that it needs JESUS. Until that happens, what we instead see is GOD's kingdom as though through a dim mirror, a faint glimmer of what things could be. This means that corrupt powers may make it seem like Satan rather than GOD is in control, but they are simply wicked tenants. The distinction between this and premillenialism is that the other believes Christ has left us behind on a sinful Earth with only the Holy Spirit as comfort, to come again to judge.

[1023] Sorry Catholics, neither Peter nor the Pope are head of the church. JESUS is

creations, that he can do good works through us.[1024] He then asks them to remember the distinction between Gentiles and Christians through circumcision (done by human hands), and then compare this to the becoming a part of Christ as a sort of spiritual circumcision. Just as we were formerly separate from GOD, he has cut apart that barrier. He compares this to foreigners being made a part of the household, and then he compares this unity to a temple to the LORD. He continues with this thought discussing that Jews and Gentiles are intended to be heirs together of Israel, as one Body of Christ. As such, Paul says that GOD should be known to rules and authorities, then JESUS may accomplish his purpose, and thus we must not be discouraged because of suffering but see it as glory. Paul then prays for the Ephesians. He tells them that he is a prisoner of the LORD,[1025] he wants them to be humble, patient, and accepting of each other in love. He also talks about how if Christ can considered to be ascended, this also implies that he must have descended, so Paul accepts with this the concept that JESUS also came to save those in the depths of Sheol. And so, reminding them they are saved in Christ, they should no longer be tossed about by misfortune or random teachings, but be steady in their faith. Paul then talks about no longer living as the Gentiles do with their impurity and greed that is due to separation with GOD.[1026] He instructs them to put away falsehood and to not let the sun go down on their anger, and likewise those who steal should stop and instead do work; most importantly, they should show others compassion just as Christ forgave them in compassion. Paul tells them that they should have put away darkness and live as children of light, "Sleeper awake, arise from the dead, for Christ brightens your life." Next, Paul mentions how wives and husbands should behave around each other. Due to poor wording, I had better explain it. Husbands and wives are to treat each other as part of one body. This means that you don't mistreat each other, nor are you disobedient to each other, for the relationship between husband and wife is one of complementary parts, citing Genesis.[1027] He continues this analogy with the relationship between parents and children, then masters and workers. Relationships are a two way street, harmony involves understanding that the two are one in GOD. Lastly, he compares faith to armor, telling people to put on the full armor of GOD.

Paul writes to the Philippians as well. The prevailing theme here is joy despite hardship. Paul talks about how his chains advances the Gospel, and mentions that we ought to live a life worthy of JESUS Christ. This is not really about good works (though there is merit in works) but about not being afraid of those who oppose you, but instead standing firm in the *Ruach ha Kodesh*. He says that believers will go through the same struggle that Christ did. As such, we should do things not out of ambition but love and humility, sharing in compassion and tenderness with other believers, for he says of JESUS, "Being in very nature GOD, did not consider equality with GOD something to be used to his own advantage. Rather, she[1028] made her the very nature of a servant, made in human likeness. She took a living body as a man, and he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death, even death on a cross! Therefore GOD exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of JESUS every knee should bow, and every tongue confess that JESUS Christ is LORD, to the glory of GOD the Father." As such, everything that we do ought to be carried out without grumbling, that we might be considered to be without fault in a flawed generation.[1029] Paul talks about how if anyone has reason to boast,[1030] he has more: (while he was born a Roman citizen) he is a

---

[1024] If this is confusing, it's like this: works are not a means to impress GOD, who we can never measure up to, but rather an outpouring of his grace.

[1025] Effectively saying that not only is he bound and committed to JESUS, but that GOD has caused his imprisonment as a means for him to spread the Gospel.

[1026] I suppose I could point out that this is a contradiction, as through grace we are considered united in Christ, and forgiven our sins. Let's humor Paul though, and say that it nonetheless important to remember, as these Gentiles were led around by their rejection of the LORD, so even if he forgave them, they were living a messed up life.

[1027] I want to veer away from two unhealthy extremes. First is the chauvinistic asshole mindset that because wives ought to be obedient as a man is a head of the household, then beating her up is disciple. Sorry, but it says you should treat her as your own body, so that doesn't fly. The second is the radical feminist notion that men and women are completely the same, which brings them into competition. Women and men are complementary halves of a whole. And no, I don't think we ought to typecast men or women for certain roles, but labor needs to be divided.

[1028] The pre-existent JESUS is Lady Wisdom. Later, I mention male pronouns, because JESUS has incarnated as a male.

[1029] Effectively, Paul is saying that Christians are a sort of role model to non-Christians.

[1030] He says "confidence in the flesh" but it's more about works here.

Jew of the tribe of Benjamin, a Pharisee, and a blameless follower of the law. Yet these count for nothing, or indeed less than nothing, for he considers them to be garbage in comparison to the Gospel. He contrasts those who live in conflict with GOD and how they are set on earthly things,[1031] with those who follow Christ and how their citizenship is in the Afterlife, where they will be in the presence of JESUS and their bodies will be transformed to like his glorious form. He closes this letter telling them to be steadfast and united in the LORD, and tells them to rejoice in the LORD, even in hard times.

There are also letters to Timothy. He explains that the law is good if used properly, but it is not for the righteous but rather for sinners. In other words, such people hate the law because it shows them they are wrong. But like a mirror, it also shows them how they can improve in the eyes of GOD, so it was made on their behalf (just as JESUS suffered not on behalf of righteous but the sinners). Paul talks about how (despite being a righteous Pharisee) was once like these wayward sinners, persecuting the followers of Christ with all his power. So he tells them to pray for all people, including those in authority that we might live quiet lives of holiness, for GOD our Savior wants all people to be saved; there is one GOD and one mediator between GOD and mankind who gave himself as ransom for all sins. Now even though our sins are forgiven, we still ought to be our best because we love JESUS. This is good so far, but...

Paul then goes into a sexist diatribe about women that feels not only very off-topic but also inserted. For context, it appears he was forbidding some showy women from preaching. Because of their newfound freedom under the church, some of them basically dressed in a tacky and sexualized way. Paul thought that such women shouldn't be in positions of authority. While I agree that the people of the church should not embrace the showy ways of secular life with elaborate clothes or fancy jewelry, the way he said it made no distinction between these women who were new to their faith, and more spiritual women, as might be made between Lady Wisdom and Lady Folly elsewhere. It also felt like something Muhammad would write about women dressing modestly, not being allowed leadership positions, staying quiet, and being submissive. He also blames women for being deceived by the snake,[1032] and says woman's salvation comes through childbirth. Sorry, women should indeed be leaders in the church, once they have spiritual maturity.[1033] Also, Paul had women in leadership positions (such as Priscilla). So I had little use for this text.

Back to what Paul actually wrote. He talks about how those wishing to be overseers in the church should be faithful to their wives, temperature, hospitable, able to teach (and to learn), nonviolent, and not led by addictions. Anyone who cannot have a harmonious family is not qualified to be a church leader. Paul compares the church to a household when giving such standards: it should not be abusive, nor manipulative, nor toxic. He tells them that some may abandon their faith and follow deceiving spirits, and you will know these by adherence to earthly rules such as forbidding to marry or forbidding certain foods. And he tells them "Do not muzzle an ox that is treading grain," that a worker deserves their wages. But he also warns them against false teachers and how money is the root of all evil. Paul asks the church to join him in suffering, not being ashamed of him because he is a prisoner. He tells about how GOD actually gave us grace at the beginning of time (that is, it is not something only present after the death of JESUS) but it was only revealed with the death of Christ. Paul compares following Christ to being a good soldier or an athlete, how no soldier becomes entangled in civilian's affairs but tries to please the officer, just as no athlete wins the victor's crown by breaking the rules. Paul talks about how there will be terrible times, and some will try to come into

---

[1031] The passage originally mentions "their destiny is destruction" but not only do I not believe in predestination (considering it an excuse for behavior), I also think an omnipotent loving GOD would not make anything just to destroy it, and having the power to do otherwise, would have a redemption plan for those too. They are nonetheless convinced that when they die there will be nothing after, but likely either some sort of temporary punishment (not to exceed lifespan) or reincarnation awaits them until they finally are redeemed.

[1032] The snake was a creation of GOD. Sin is a setup, so that we might understand free will in the context of GOD's forgiveness. Eve is not to blame.

[1033] Ironically, because the church believed for years that not under any circumstances should women lead, that we now have women radicalized by woke policy. Such women are at least as bad as the showy women, as they are secular and actively hate the church in some cases.

homes and defraud widows by preying on their shame about their sins.[1034] He talks about how he was rescued from many sufferings, but witnesses many evildoers and religious impostors. He talks about how impostors deceive and are deceived.[1035] Paul reminds us that we should continue to preach regardless of the season or time, reminding followers that some will not listen to sensible teaching, but have "itching ears" and instead seek after their own teachers to advise them, turning to myths instead of the truth. He again compares following the Gospel to being a good soldier, or to running a race, and he says that he has accomplished this. And he compares the victory awards for a race (or battle) to the crown of righteousness that he is sure that he will be rewarded.

There are other letters of import. John's letters tell us that in anyone sins, we have an Advocate in JESUS, and he is the perfect offering for out sins, but not just ours but the entire world has its sins forgiven. He also reminds us that if we say that we have sinned we deceive ourselves (for all of us have sinned), but if we confess our sins, Christ is ready to forgive us. There were other writings of merit, particularly some of Peter's writings. But like gold mixed with dross, some of these letters had impurities to them that I simply didn't feel like using my time refining out. Anyone who reads the letters of the apostles is allowed to decide for themselves. These were ones I thought of value.

ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION

THE SAVIOR AND THE EXECUTIONER

What the people of Israel needed was salvation. While Antiochus Epiphanes was still fresh in the peoples' minds, so much so that many of JESUS's own followers had the names Judas, Simon, or John, all of which were based on the names of the Maccabees. And indeed, at least one was a zealot. What Israel wanted was a Messiah to lead them from salvation from their enemies. Indeed, the prophecies of their people seemed to tell of a great leader of the people. They surely wanted a man to overcome their enemies, to tell them they were right to fight against Rome just as they had fought earlier against Epiphanes. Ah, but you misunderstand. This is a GOD who gives us what we *need*. Did I say that GOD always gives us what we want?

Now Rome had taken over their country, taxes were high, and the temple also expected its fair share. This was a temple that had been built not by GOD or by the authority of any righteous man. "Unless the LORD builds the house, they labor in vain who build it." Herod commissioned this temple[1036], and it was whole only a few short years before being destroyed, compared to the temples build by GOD with cooperation of righteous men, which lasted centuries. It was in construction for the majority of its life, an expensive vanity project to a vain man, a building done in vain.

The people were drowning in tax debt from Rome, and the temple wanted its "fair share". This temple was a monstrosity. While earlier temples were simple structures where GOD could be worshiped without partiality, this one was a building of walls. There was the around the building itself, which led into the gates where Gentiles met (or who were supposed to meet) for prayer, there was the area for women, the area for men, the area for the priests, and the a Holy of Holies where GOD was supposed to be. They had walled everything up quite neatly, putting GOD behind a pretty curtain where the poor, the sinful, and the desperate could not meet him. The temple had eight marble tables for sacrificing animals, eight pillars for hanging the carcasses of such animals, and twenty-four rings fastened to hold animals. The temple itself was white stone with gold trim, and every Jew who saw this place thought this temple to be a monument to the glory and majesty of GOD. Every Jew but one. This is a GOD who gives us what we need. And what Israel needed was not a costly and expensive war. Nor did they need another ruler, when the Herodians were living rich while others starved. And they

---

[1034] This is actually talking a fair amount about priests. Priests sometimes do stuff like get people to be huge donors, playing on their sense of guilt.

[1035] There's a passage about how all scripture is inspired from GOD after this. But the problem with this is that you would have to know what is considered canon. Some things like Hebrews, James, Jude, and Revelation were rejected by Martin Luther and other religious figures, but they were shoehorned in and couldn't be removed. Part of the problem of believing all work is inspired by GOD is that you could say that one of these impostors wrote it. So ultimately, I decided that this is true if we understand that canon is about what inspires *you* from GOD, not some official list.

[1036] Herod's temple is falsely called the second temple. Sorry, but Solomon's temple was the first temple, Zerubbabel's temple was the second temple, and lasted until Antiochus Epiphanes, then rededicated (Hanukkah). This "temple" by Herod was a falsehood, built over about 400 years of a real second temple. GOD is the third and final Temple through JESUS.

certainly did not need a temple that was built up for about all but six of the years before it was destroyed. What Israel needed was a prophet. And it got one.

Now JESUS may have been born the Son of GOD, he may have been the Messiah, he may been a great healer and exorcist, and he may have risen from the dead. We won't dispute these points. I believe them, the Jewish people may not, but that part is not immediately relevant right now. What is would be his status as a prophet. Just as Jeremiah, he was called to tell the truth, even when the leaders would not hear it. Just as Hosea, he told the people that GOD desires mercy not sacrifice. And just as many of the prophets, he called for an end to the excesses of sacrifice. In order to dedicate a temple, there needed to be thirty-six oxen, a gross of sheep and lambs, and seventy-two goats and kids over a twelve day period. Then there were Passover sacrifices, Yom Kippur sacrifices, and offerings to atone for sins. Israel was running with the blood of animals. It had walled men away from women, Gentiles from Jews, and GOD from his people, while the blood flowed down the street. And it wasn't just the blood of animals. Remember Rome? If people didn't pay their taxes, they could expect to be enslaved or killed. It didn't help that some of these taxes were collected when a tax man accosted a Jew along a path. They might pay what they owed once to a wandering collector, who would not bother to report that the debt had been paid to the person at the booth. This lack of oversight meant that nobody could really have any way of knowing whether what they did would pay off their debt. And it wasn't just the economic debts. Because people were forced to work hard to make ends meet, they often had to work on the Sabbath. They were deemed sinful for being poor. JESUS ignored the Sabbath, often gathering grain or healing in full view of the priests, and most importantly, he caused an uproar when he drove out the money changers and the people selling sacrificial animals. There were a few things wrong with this. First, these things were in the court of the Gentiles, the space they had to pray, effectively shutting them out of worship to GOD. Second, they had basically turned animal sacrifice into a business, profiting from human sin. And third, if people had sin (like working on the Sabbath) and could not bring or afford a proper sacrifice, they were basically being told that GOD would not forgive their sins. Heaped upon the suffering of people under harsh Roman taxes was the added condemnation (apparently) from GOD, the notion that even if a Jew worked his hardest for his family, his sins would not be forgiven.

But why did JESUS have to die? Well, that's a complicated answer, but the short version is that he made everyone his enemy. To the Jewish priests, he was recording saying that their temple would fall, and probably that it was built by human hands instead of under the authority of GOD. He also defied their Sabbath, and showed the crowds that sacrifices are not needed to be right with GOD. The Romans hated him because he created disturbances and ignored the taxes and tributes. And even the crowd hated him, because he was not the Messianic freedom fighter they thought they should have. He spoke of forgiveness as part of his salvation message, not of salvation from the hand of enemies.

So who ultimately killed JESUS? Well about that... How about we ask a few simple questions about who *didn't* kill JESUS. Did the Pharisees kill him? No. Despite trying for some time to debate with him and trap him in his words, they couldn't find anything that could directly arrest him. It required one of his own disciples betraying him to have him forcibly brought to court. And when JESUS was before the Sanhedrin, the witnesses against him could not agree. Was it Rome who killed him? Well, no, not that either. JESUS was taken before Pilate, and Pilate became convinced that this was not a political king but a religious leader. So he took him to the newest Herod, who again became convinced that this was not a political king but a religious leader. Nevertheless, while Pilate wanted him freed, it seemed to be the crowd who wanted him dead (probably egged on by the Pharisees). So did the crowd kill him? Well, not as much. Yes, Pilate had to listen to the crowd cry out "Crucify him!" but they never laid a hand on him. Sorry, Jew haters, the Jews didn't kill JESUS.

So who actually killed JESUS? Well, nobody. He was whipped, made to carry a cross, then died well before the Romans normally expected, so his legs didn't have to be broken. In other words, he died of exhaustion. He deliberately offered himself up for the sins of Roman and of Israel. Nobody killed JESUS. Is it any wonder, then, that he rose from the dead?

OMENS OF DISASTER

After this, you know the rest. An empty tomb was found, and the guards agreed with the priesthood that it should be told that the disciples had the body. Okay, so where is it? In any case, the Christians

now went out and preached the news of the Savior. What isn't as commonly told is what happened with the Jews.

First of all, remember that big curtain separating the inside of the temple from the Holy of Holies? Well ummm, when JESUS died, it was torn from top to bottom. This happened right around the time JESUS died. This wasn't just an event though, it was also a symbol. The temple had put GOD in a dark room behind a curtain, isolating the people of Israel from GOD. But now, GOD was able to speak in person to all the people. In a very real sense, anyone who entered the temple could look directly on the place where GOD was, and offer prayers directly to him. It should have been easy enough to see what this meant. But instead, religious meetings were simply moved to a different area of the temple. There was no "Maybe GOD is trying to tell us something here," just "Sorry, we have a construction issue. We'll deal with this later."

While denial is a tempting instinct, GOD wasn't going to let this go. GOD would be heard. There were other signs and wonders. In the Talmud and other Jewish passages, about four or five weird things happened. There was what appeared to be a sword in the night sky. The gates of the temple swung open. The cloth that was supposed to turn white after the blood of the sacrifice stayed red. The lot that was supposed to drawn a white stone for atonement in Yom Kippur instead drew the black stone for scapegoat. And lastly, everyone night, the western lights to the temple would snuff out. What did such signs mean?

Well let's start with the star constellation. This is fairly straightforward. A sword means war is coming. Alternatively, this was the cross in the sky, reminding what has had been done. JESUS had told a parable to the Pharisees about some wicked tenants who had been sent servants to collect from the vineyard, but instead they beat or killed the servants.[1037] Finally, the master sent his own son, figuring they would at least treat his son better. The Pharisees themselves answered what should happen to such people. Such wicked tenants should be arrested, and the vineyard that was entrusted to them should be given to another.

Next, there is the light going out at the west side of the temple. This wasn't just a regular light, mind you, it was the menorah, the main light of the temple. Remember earlier, where we talked about how GOD had provided light for all those days, kicking off the celebration of Hanukkah? Well, this was a light that was expected to stay lit to light the other lights in the temple, an eternal light of sorts, yet every night for forty years, no matter how they prepared, this light went out. If the light was a symbol of GOD'S spirit dwelling in the temple, it was a clear message, "Soon I will no longer dwell in this temple."

The same was true of the doors swinging open, but there was an added warning. The Jewish authority at the time, Rabbi Yohanan ben Zakkai also decided that it was a sign of impending doom. He was convinced this meant that enemy armies could freely enter, and GOD was not going to be responsible for the temple or Israel's security. While this turned out to be true, there was also another message. All could now freely enter. With the curtain also open, the message was that worship of GOD was not only open to priests, but anyone could walk in.

Next, there are the two other miracles, the cloth not turning white and the lot always going to scapegoat. At the time of Simeon the Righeous was High Priest centuries earlier, the cloth would always turn white. The Jews believed that this was a sign their sins were forgiven. As for the lot, the stones seemed to be governed by chance, picking scapegoat half the time. But after JESUS died, the cloth never turned white again, and the lot consistently picked scapegoat. The message should have been clear. There was something fundamentally broken with the old sacrificial system, and now GOD thought they had made JESUS a scapegoat for their sin. Yet nobody thought to repent. And so, within the next forty years, the temple itself was doomed.

But what happened? And why? Why did the temple have to be destroyed?

Well, it's actually far easier to talk about the why than the long string of events leading up to the fall of the temple. First, the fall of the temple was punishment for the treatment of GOD's prophets. And not just JESUS, as JESUS mentioned that no prophet can die outside of Jerusalem. Jerusalem was the city where animals and prophets came to be slaughtered. And so, JESUS conflated the two. There were

[1037] In case you missed it, that's a reference to the numerous prophets killed at the hands of the Jews. The master is clearly GOD, and the son is JESUS.

prophecies about the East Gate of Jerusalem. This gate was a direct path to the temple that was only really used for sacrifice on the Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur), and JESUS further scheduled this entrance on the eve of Passover, when a lamb was to be slaughtered so that GOD'S angel of Death would pass over. Second, there were the hostilities between Jews and Romans. Along with several revolts by the zealots, JESUS's death was what you would call a public relations fiasco. Pilate was warned that his methods were too brutal, and here an innocent man was put to the cross. The tension between Rome and the Jews was reaching a boiling point.

Now we have to talk about history. How did the temple fall? What led to that point?

From a read of history around this point, it becomes obvious that in fact most of the history of the fall of Herod's temple has nothing whatsoever to do with the Jews. Before JESUS and his death on the cross, emperors in Rome and Herods in Israel were at constant flux. There were enough Caesars that it was not always easy to determine who was in charge within the timeframe of the Bible. This author admits they are confused. Nevertheless... in the first century, Herod Archelaus was deposed by Caesar Augustus. Augustus in turn adopted Tiberius, who took command ten years later in Germania. Augustus died four years after that, and later Tiberius granted Drusus Julius Caesar (not to be confused with the famous Julius Caesar) the power as tribunician, which was probably to make him successor later on. A year later Drusus dies, probably from poison at the hands of Sejanus. So next, Tiberius retired and left Sejanus in control of Rome. About three years later, Tiberius's mother winds up dead, and Tiberius decides to execute Sejanus, and brings Caligula with him in Capri. This was just around the time that JESUS died, give or take a few years.

While all of this political instability was going on, Rome was having wars of expansion, such as the Battle of the Weser River. Now Rome typically didn't emphasize peace and agriculture, they were largely a military society that based its culture on a simplification of Greek thought. This meant their gods were essentially the same as Greek gods but different names, their architecture was based on ideas from Greece, but less ornate and more functional. This meant that while Rome had some things of real beauty, what their society focused on was conquest. They'd fight a war, take the land and use it to extract agriculture and funds through tribute system. This usually meant that they were constantly needing funds for war costs, and those were paid by their colonies. This of course meant that places like Israel were supposed to be Roman, worship Roman gods, and pay Roman taxes. But of course, Israel wanted none of this. But for now, most of what Rome was concentrating on is around Germanic provinces, aside from the whole JESUS dying on the cross thing, and some rebellions, of course. They were also still fresh with ideas of revolution, having had a Maccabean Revolt years ago, and believing that the Messiah would come any day to liberate them.

At this time, Pilate watched after Israel, but was already having a reputation of excessive force. Pilate wanted to promote faith in the Roman emperor, so he sent ensigns bearing the image of Caesar into Jerusalem by night, which meant that within a few days, his house became surrounded by angry Jews. Pilate wanted to have soldiers cut them into pieces, but the Jews showed no fear of death (kneeling and offering their necks), so he eased off and removed the images. Another time, he tried to use up the temple treasury (which was Corban[1038]) to pay for a new aqueduct. Pilate ordered his own men to disguise themselves and use staves instead of swords to beat those who protested, and some were trampled to death when people tried to leave the area. Other Roman leaders also tried to do things like place statues in the temple, and at Pilate's end, he ran afoul of some Samaritan resistance, causing him to be removed from power. Herod Agrippa (a friend of Claudius and Drusus, and somewhat rich because of the alliance) began to build walls around the city of Jerusalem until he died in 44 AD, leaving the walls of insufficient height. Along with insufficient physical protections, the other reason the Jews would later be defeated by Rome was that they were divided by schism into four factions: the Pharisees, the Sadducees, the Zealots, and the Essenes, the latter of which probably influenced the thoughts of JESUS. The Jewish people believe that had they been united, GOD would have protected them. The Christian people, however, think the problem was that they rejected the Messiah. In any case, it didn't help that they had unfinished walls until much later.

Back to activities in Rome. Tiberius died and Caligula was left in his will along with Tiberius

[1038] An offering reserved to GOD.

Gemellus, who soon died under Caligula's orders, leaving him in charge. Under Caligula, the imperial cult was pushed, which led to brief tensions, when the Jews dismantled an altar to the emperor. Caligula in turn ordered a statue of himself to be placed in the temple, which met with some pushback. But Caligula himself was assassinated by Cassius Chaerea, and Claudius (the same one mentioned earlier) was made princeps. He restored the Jewish monarchy under Herod Agrippa. Claudius made Agrippa's son Agrippa II the king of Judea after his father died. Claudius married his niece, Agrippina the Younger, and adopted her son Nero. Unfortunately, Nero was an ambitious man who had little love for Jews or Christians. After Claudius died, he came into power, and it is likely he killed both Agrippina and Claudius's natural son Britannicus through poison or other means. And he killed many other people who weren't related to him, crucifying many and putting Felix in power over Judea. He also after the death of his wife Poppaea Sabina was so obsessed with her that he spent his mourning time becoming increasingly deranged, until he found a teenage body named Sporus, who he castrated and surgically altered to look more like his wife, than made him dress and act like her. Sporus was eventually married to Nero, as an object lesson on how messed up transgender surgery is, as this encounter erased his identity completely.

Anyway, as a result of mass crucifixions, a band of thugs known as Sicarii[1039] started carrying knives under their clothes and assassinating people, particularly those in sympathy to Rome. This also led to a few priests in Jerusalem being killed, as it was suspected they had a secret alliance. And a great many Jews were slaughtered as a result of these men and attempts to stop them. After Felix, Festus came into power over Judea, and he did his best to correct abuses. But Albinus after him doubled down on wicked practice, both through high taxes and by offering to have people buy criminals out of prison, so much that the streets were filled with robbers.

Under Roman rule, merchants blocked all but a narrow path to the synagogues, preventing an easy way to worship and sacrifice. Despite attempts to buy the land from Greek owners, they instead refused and built workshops on the land. Around this time, a man sacrificed a dove[1040] and other birds in a chamber pot at the entrance to the synagogue on the Sabbath, causing a riot. At this time, Florus was in power, and even more than Felix, Festus, and Albinus, he had no love for the Jewish people. He raided the temple in response, and massacred the people there. He even nailed a few Jews of Roman birth[1041] to a cross. This upheaval led Rome to send four legions into Judea to put down the rebellion. But by this time, there was a full blown war.

The Stoic Opposition

While the Christians and Jews[1042] were persecuted under Nero, something else was happening behind the scenes. As explained earlier, Nero punished the Christians for the fire that burned Rome, for Christianity was seen as a threat to the established order of Rome, and Christians with their tendency to not fight back much were seen as an easy target. But they were hardly the only target to his wrath. As Nero was a classic dictator, he was increasingly paranoid of any real or perceived opposition, and this began to include even members of the Roman Senate.

Before we continue, it is perhaps best to explain what the Stoic philosophy is. Stoicism had some things in common with Christianity, and some major differences. For instance, while classical Roman philosophy (which Nero wanted instead of Christianity) taught social order and the importance of a class system, Stoicism taught equality and the importance of all people being educated. They also taught the importance of reason (particularly in philosophy), the value of humility and simplicity, and that you couldn't simply discuss ideas but had to practice them. These ideas were shared in part or whole with Christians, and to a lesser extent Jews. What wasn't shared was their mentality about forgiveness, as Christians believed in forgiving sins, while the Stoics believed in simply accepting

---

[1039] These were Jewish Zealots who resisted Roman power. The name refers to their dagger.

[1040] The historical texts say "birds" but I think it was a dove, being a symbol of the Holy Spirit, because they were essentially seized with religious zeal.

[1041] As mentioned in Acts, this is practically a taboo. Roman citizens were protected by law, as Paul's appeal to Rome shows.

[1042] The Jewish Virtual Library states that unlike other Roman emperors, Nero had nothing personally against the Jews, using Christians in particular as a scapegoat. He did however, enact employ tax collectors including Festus, Felix, Albinus, and Gessius Florus. Florus in particular hated the Jews, and his harsh taxes and punishments led to the great revolt in 66 AD, at which point Nero moved an army against the Jews.

hardship. They also were a secular philosophy, and as such lacked the same concept for things like the Afterlife, the purpose of life, or belief in GOD. All the same, while Christianity as a religion had some contrasts with Stoicism, the simple and humble mindset of the Stoics had irreconcilable differences with the "bread and circus" lifestyle of Nero. Why are the Stoics relevant to this topic? Well...

Some of the Senate were followers of a Stoic philosopher known as Gaius Musonius Rufus. Rufus taught a number of things, like to not do any unnecessary adjustments to one's hair or beard, not to kill animals but instead to eat what could be gathered naturally, humility in clothing and housing and food, but the most important teachings he had were the rules of conduct for kings. Musonius explained that a king has a duty to his people, and this duty is to protect and support his subjects in the best way he can. But in order to do this, a king must first know good from evil, fairness from unfairness, and helpful from harmful. Without knowing these things, it is impossible for the king to rule justly. Rufus thus theorized that there should be philosopher kings, a class of leaders who were educated in the ethics, and understood the needs of the people. As you may have guessed, Nero kinda sorta didn't fit the bill. Rufus himself was exiled, but his followers also made trouble, and three of them were executed (thus earning the title "Stoic martyrs").

The first of these to be mentioned was Thrasea Paetus. Thrasea Paetus was born in 14 AD, and saw Rome at what he decided was its finest (though we can argue during the time of Christ, they were still very brutalist), and now saw that under Nero, it had become increasingly autocratic. He had joined the Senate in an effort to change things, but increasingly saw cynical acceptance of matters. For example, when Nero murdered his mother, it was put to a vote whether to award him honors for what he had done (presumably to appease him). Thrasea decided to leave rather than see that vote, effectively abstaining.[1043] Normally, this would be a diplomatic way of quietly disagreeing, but under Nero, like under other dictators, anything but complete agreement is seen as dissent. And Nero considered him and his allies to traitors of the highest order, for dire crimes like: general non-attendance at the Roman Senate, non-participation in the senatorial oath to the Emperor at the beginning of each year, evading the priestly oath for the emperor, absenting himself from the vote of divine honours to Nero's second wife Poppaea and not attending her funeral, and never offering a sacrifice for the welfare of the emperor. As you can see, most of these were crimes of inaction, not action, and would simply be done by walking away from the Senate. In any case, Nero sent Thrasea a letter demanding his death sentence, and Thrasea wrote back asking two questions: what are the charges, and when is the trial. Instead, Nero sent thugs to kill him. Thrasea calmly told them before they opened veins on both arms, "Nero can kill me, but he can never harm me."

Another was Seneca, who ironically was a Stoic despite having some serious wealth at odds with his humble philosophy. But you see, there is a story behind that. He was born in Spain and educated in Rome, exiled for a supposed adultery with Caligula's sister. Eight years later, Agrippina, mother of Nero (the one he murdered later, remember) arranged his return on the condition that he tutor Nero. This was where much of his wealth came from, for that matter. Nero was apparently a poor student, as he later arranged his death for a perceived plot to assassinate him and replace him with Gaius Piso.

The third Stoic we will mention here (though there are probably more) was Rubellius Plautus. Like the others, he wanted to push away from government by tyrants and more towards the idea of philosophical government. But even if he hadn't been outspoken about Nero, his very existence was a threat to this emperor. His mother was related by blood to previous emperors, and wanted her son to be emperor, resorting to a great deal of intrigue to try to make it happen. The in 60 AD, a comet passed by the sky, and some people took it as a sign that he would replace Nero, as they had frequently been rivals. He was exiled, and later Nero ordered a centurion to assassinate him. The is some record that he may have known that he was going to be assassinated, and stayed where he was, choosing to face death. He was killed while doing his morning exercises, and his head was brought to Nero (who made fun of him before killing his family).

As a result of this opposition, his paranoia was beginning to affect his reign itself. The Roman people began to speak out against him, his grip on the military was becoming unsteady, and there was even

[1043] An abstained vote is normally not counted, even for a unanimous vote. If those who vote are unanimous, the vote passes without the abstained votes.

talk of rebellion. This and dealing with the growing religion of Christianity (and tax issues with the Jews) ultimately meant that he committed suicide around the time of Emperor Galba. Had Nero not met opposition from these other people, he might well have continued persecuting Christians until the religion was snuffed out. But GOD protects his people, and good men are often willing to oppose evil. This is not only true of Jews and Christians but any men of principle. Violent opposition is not always necessary, what is important is bringing truth to power.

THE FALL OF THE TEMPLE

Seeing the hostilities, Agrippa II tried to calm people down, claiming they could not stand against the invincible power of the Roman army. The people seemed to calm initially, but decided they were at war not with Rome but Florus. While the Jews paid 40 talents to Rome, when Agrippa asked them to put up with Florus until a new leader could be chosen, they tried to stone him and he fled the city. Eleazar ben Hanania, the son of former High Priest Ananias, persuaded the priests to cease accepting gifts or sacrifices from foreigners. This in turn ended sacrifices on behalf of Rome, and unified the people in war against Rome. The Sicarii lead by Menahem ben Judah, a descendant of Judas of Galilee (who led a revolt in 6 AD against the census) carried out a surprise attack on the fortress of Masada. They captured the fortress and killed the Romans there, transferring their weapons to Jerusalem. As before with Agrippa, the Pharisees urged them not to fight, but after this failed, they called for help. Agrippa sent 2000 cavalrymen to Jerusalem, but the rebels took the upper city, and burned the public records.[1044] The rebels then took the Antonia Fortress after a two-day siege, and with reinforcements from the Sicarii, they took Herod's Palace. Eventually, they agreed to a ceasefire against Agrippa and the moderate Jews, but remained opposed to Rome. The Romans retreated, but these rebels continued fighting, killing Ananias and his brother in the conflict. The rebels lay siege to the fortresses the Romans retreated to, eventually forcing their surrender, but the rebels massacred all of them but their commander, who pledged to convert to Judaism and undergo circumcision. In response to all of this, the non-Jews of Caesarea ethnically cleansed the local Jewish population, and about twenty thousand people died. This violence spread to Syria and Damascus, and to to the Decapolis. Cestius Gallus, the Roman legate of Syria, decided to march to Judaea but eventually met with defeat.

After Cestius Gallus' defeat, a popular assembly met at the temple of Jerusalem and established a provisional government led by the aristocracy. They even minted coins bearing the inscription, «Jerusalem the Holy» or «For the Freedom of Zion»[1045] and they eventually decided to attack Herod Antipas's palace. While the provisional government was pretending to seek revolt, they were also trying to negotiate a peace with Rome, the radical elements being out of step with their leadership. Many other military actions happened, including one point were they were under siege for 47 days and hid in caves, eventually being driven into a deep pit. But you know, it's not really relevant. Looking at all of this, it seemed like JESUS was the best the Jewish culture had to offer the world, but this? This is less like brilliant guerrilla tactics and more like online trolls having a temper tantrum. Or to put it into a better analogy, they literally were driven even past their cave-dwelling days to a great desolate pit of despair. This was nothing to glorify or look back longingly upoon, this was them at their worst. And apparently, GOD thought so too, because of what happened next. Nero eventually died. Unfortunately, he had a son named Titus, and Titus must have blamed his dad's death on the Jews. The Jews eventually fought amongst themselves and the Zealots tried to kill off the priesthood (choosing a new high priest named Phannias ben Samuel by lot),[1046] and looted homes and seized crops. Then Titus came with an armor of fifty thousand while they were still infighting, set up spy camps at Mount Scopus and the Mount of Olives, came through the temple courtyards,[1047] knocked through the next wall and continued into the suburbs. They used Josephus, a historian writing much of the story about Israel's temple falling, to conduct psychological warfare through speeches calling

[1044] They were trying to enlist support from the lower classes, so they were trying to wipe out any records of past debts.
[1045] This was later amended to For the Redemption of Zion
[1046] Their choice in priest had neither priestly lineage nor was at all trained for the job.
[1047] The Jews had eventually strengthened their walls from earlier. But it didn't matter, because these courtyards were open to the public because it was a festival. This festival is called the Fast of Tammuz. Earlier, I thought mistakenly it was Passover. It's instead the same day that Moses broke the Ten Commandments over the golden calf, and has often been an ill omen day.

for peace.[1048] Eventually a famine hit, and the Jewish people even at one point resorted to cannibalism. On 17 Tammuz, the daily sacrifice ceased. The Jews hid in the temple, hoping for refuge, but it was clear: GOD had let the troops in during the festival, GOD was starving them, and GOD destroyed the temple. For it is written, "As I have moved with the Israelites, I have never said to the tribes, who I commanded to take care of my people Israel, 'Why haven't you built me a house of cedar?'" The war ended with a complete defeat of the Jewish people, and great deal of lives lost. Israel was a conquered state. Nevertheless, they refused to give up, preserving their culture, and occasionally trying to fight again.

It is tempting to look at this and wail over the destruction of the temple, but this is probably not the lesson to be learned here. If one places faith in a building of brick and mortar, this is indeed the "abomination of desolation." But if one places faith in GOD or JESUS, then there is nothing on Earth that can ever destroy it, as Daniel prophesied about the Kingdom of GOD. GOD is our Temple.

MESSIAHS AND SAINTS

As things began to turn south in Israel, the cost of being a disciple of JESUS began to mean that his original followers all died. Let's start with people who were not among the twelve. As you know, Stephen was stoned to death while Paul witnessed. Paul himself was beheaded in Rome around the time of Nero, mainly for his role in spreading Christianity into Rome. As for the disciples of JESUS, the first to die was Judas Iscariot, who hung himself, after realizing that he couldn't undo his betrayal of JESUS. But we must remember that all the disciples fell short of JESUS, and Judas was no special case. The next two were James and John, who died by the sword at the order of Herod, as he wanted to appease the Jewish people.[1049] Like Paul, Peter was killed by Nero, though he asked to be crucified upside-down, declaring he was not as worthy as his master. Andrew went to what is now the area of Russia, and there he was crucified with his arms and legs in an X formation. Thomas went to Syria and eventually India, where he was supposed to have been pierced by soldiers with a spear (though some accounts aren't clear that he was martyred). Philip went to Asia Minor and Carthage in Africa, and there he is said to have converted the wife of a proconsul, whose husband killed him either by beheading or hanging upside-down. Matthew went to Persia and Ethiopia, with have him killed by the sword (in one account, he survived being burned alive and died a natural death). Nathanael (known sometimes as Bartholomew) went to India with Thomas, then returned to preach in Ethiopia, Armenia, and Arabia before being skinned alive and beheaded (though some accounts have him crucified). According to Josephus, James the Lesser was stoned and clubbed to death after ministering in Syria. Jude Thaddeus (known as the saint of lost causes) preached in Judea, Persia, Samaria, Idumaea, Syria, Mesopotamia, Libya, Armenia, and Lebanon before finally being killed by axes. Simon the Zealot preached in Britain as well as much of the Middle East, but was finally sawed in half while in Persia after refusing to sacrifice to the sun god. Matthias was chosen to replace Judas Iscariot, and is typically believed to have died in Syria by being burned. What about Mary Magdalene? Many of the women who followed JESUS were just monetary supporters or wives of the apostles, and thus avoided martyrdom. These women either lived and died with their husbands, or joined them in the Afterlife. Did Mary die peacefully in a cave, as some believed? No, she did not. Mary was an apostle of JESUS, not mentioned as equal only because she was female, and like JESUS, she was put to death on the cross for her testimony.[1050] Her body has been reportedly found in France, so this is likely where she died.

The cost of being a disciple of Christ was high, but voluntary. Ideally in this world, nobody should have to die for preaching of a kingdom intended by GOD, but the world is often not ideal. While not all of the Christians in the world have been martyrs, this world is not always kind to believers. After JESUS and his apostles died, the killing of Christians did not stop. Many Christians were thrown to the

---

[1048] I am not certain he's conducting psychological war. This is a legitimate request if GOD does not appear to be on your side.
[1049] As I've mentioned before, I don't accept the teaching that John lived on and wrote Revelation in Patmos, and the boiling oil story is farfetched. This is not to say that miracles do not happen, but they don't happen in direct contradiction to predictions of JESUS, or this undermines his status as Son of GOD. "A house divided cannot stand."
[1050] There are actually many stories of Mary's death, including stoning of beheading. But only crucifixion works from a narrative standpoint as Mary deeply cared for JESUS. In paintings she is always near the cross, but the painters think that this could not happen to her as well. But this seems like an insult to her legacy.

lions to entertain the masses of Rome, but sometimes the lions would not attack them. Those people would often gain an opportunity to share the message of JESUS. And there were the Forty Martyrs of Sebaste, a group of soldiers who confessed Christ, and as a result were made to stand in a pool of freezing water for hours unless they recanted of JESUS. One of them did try to recant, moving into warm water, only to go into shock and die. When watching this, Aglaius, one of the guards to these soldiers joined them. And there were many others who as a group or by themselves died for JESUS. The Romans persecuted the Christians for years and years, until one Roman ruler known as Constantine latched on the idea to subvert it. The story told by the Catholics is that JESUS founded the Catholic church and Peter was the first bishop, but actually the Early Church was quite different from the Catholic church, as legalized by Constantine, which was basically a state church. For more than a thousand years, the Roman (Catholic) church has tried to control who gets to read the Gospel, claiming only priests were allowed access. They further prevented knowledge of the Gospel by keeping it in a language that the public largely did not know, Latin. It was only with the Protestant Reformation that the public finally had a Bible of their own, and could know the word of GOD in their own language. In this way, a man named Martin Luther redeemed the church that had long suffered under false teachings, for the people of his time though that GOD's forgiveness could be bought, as before in ancient Israel. Even today, the public are brainwashed to believe (in contrast to the idea that GOD created the Heaven and Earth so it cannot be moved) that the Earth is spinning around the sun in 66,600 mph[1051] while the sun in turn pulls the Earth, rather than being appointed with the moon to govern the sky. Since they couldn't be kept in line by a false church, they are now kept in line with priests that tell them they are going to Hell, or to follow the Pope as he is (supposedly) given authority by GOD, or teachers trying to convince them to be godless. And when these systems of control are threatened, as in recent years, the claws have come out. Our governments have tried to persecute Christianity, for they want to martyr the faithful in secret. Or drive them to despair, with teachings designed to take faith away or convince them of their sin, or convince them there is no sin.[1052] The truth will set us free.

But martyrdom was not limited to Christians. The Jews themselves died in great numbers. The abomination of desolation was the destruction of the temple, and GOD will indeed allow wicked men at times to defile places of worship.[1053] But while the world we live in may not like GOD, and set up kings and rulers in opposition to him, we are *all* GOD's saints.

The Jews sometimes believe that the only purpose of the Messiah coming is to bring Israel to restoration and overthrow its enemies. They believe that being the Chosen People of GOD, they have no sins. But let me explain something. A sacrifice of atonement means that someone offers something precious to them in payment for their sins. Unfortunately, there is no good way to do this. Let me explain. Suppose every time that I stole a loaf of bread, I gave a gem or coin to the temple. Okay, that's payment for the sin, but not a sacrifice. It's an object or monetary donation on behalf of the bread. But GOD doesn't have any use for coins, only people do. Nor does it really relieve the guilt in my heart for stealing. Ultimately, I shouldn't have stolen in the first place, but now that I have, I have to find something to give in payment of that injustice. Sacrifice is a gift of oneself. This rules out animal sacrifices, as we do not actually own other life, we only claim to. A sheep or dove will fly or walk where it wants, given a chance, it never belongs to us. We only keep it as property. Such things would be at best, a covering over of sin. It would maybe make us feel better, but to GOD, this compounds our sin with the sin of killing an animal. He says as much, calling the blood of animals disgusting, and the mentions he does not delight in such offerings. An offering therefore, can only be of oneself, of one's own flesh and blood. But there are two problems with this. First, you could not, say offer a finger or hand or arm on behalf of your sins, or the people of Israel would be a mass of armless one-eyed freaks. Second, sacrificing of your own blood is forbidden under the same laws that

---

[1051] If you want proof that Revelation is written by evil people, it is that those who are wicked use it as a signal to each other. The original text of Revelation couldn't keep straight whether the number was even 616 or 666, but those in power (the Roman Catholic church) decided to canonize it as the official dogma. The same people who tried to control the Church and keep it ignorant for a thousand years.

[1052] All of us have sin, this is how GOD is able to redeem us. Because we are imperfect creations, GOD can declare "nobody is perfect", and die on behalf of us.

[1053] The most recent example of this was when buildings of worship were closed off for sketchy reasons due to COVID.

forbid other human sacrifice. Just as Abraham was commanded not to give his son Isaac as a burnt offering, there is no just way that one can give one's son as sacrifice, unless he is willing (this is why JESUS *must* have been willing) for offering an unwilling participant is murder. In essence, if those offerings are the only thing counted, the Jews could never be forgiven. It is through GOD's mercy that he has prepared a fitting sacrifice.

Why are we talking about sacrifice? Isn't the Messiah supposed to be a redeeming king to rescue people from suffering? Yes, but all of that comes with a price tag. How can anyone be saved, if they are still living under the enslavement of sin? For Isaiah says, "The *Ruach ha Kodesh* is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, recovering of sight to the blind, to deliver those who are oppressed, and to proclaim the acceptable Year of the LORD." But if the people still suffer alienation from GOD, they are in chains. So the chains of internal slavery must be broken, before we can even talk about external freedom from oppressors. For the Messiah to be a king that will redeem Israel, conquer its enemies, and restore its temple, first we must mention the sacrifice needed to redeem Israel.

So, let's talk about the potential Messiahs in the past. There was JESUS, of course, but since the Jews do not accept him, we will call him a Savior and Messiah on behalf of the Gentiles.

Then, we have a Messiah for the Samaritans. At around 37 AD, not long after JESUS, the Samaritans had a messianic revolt near Mount Gerizim, under the lead of a Samaritan (possibly Dositheos) claiming to be the rebirth of Moses. This was quickly crushed by Pilate, but the Samaritans complained against Pilate's brutality to Vitellius the Elder, and Pilate was removed from his post.

There was Simon bar Kokhba, who the rabbi Akiva called the Messiah, after he led a revolt against Rome, but his was quickly put down and instead resulted in the slavery of Israel. In the aftermath of this, both Jews and Samaritans lost their places of worship, and so fulfilled what JESUS said, that "true worshipers will worship in spirit and in truth."

Then there was Shlomo Molcho, whose name comes from after his conversion to Judaism, and studied the Kabbalah only to be burned at the stake by the Holy Roman Empire after refusing to convert back to Christianity.

Sabbatai Zevi followed, a Sephardic Jewish rabbi who started the Sabbatean movement, and unlike some of the others was not put down by violence (unless you believe the claim made by his followers who also called themselves Messiah though, this is a self-proclaimed title, not a fulfillment of prophecy).

And lastly, there was Menachem Mendel Schneerson, a man who appears to have no distinction other than being a very righteous Jew, but whose followers decided he was Messiah.

And let us not forget Muhammad. I was watching a video where they talked about how Muhammad was effectively a folk hero to give the Arab people someone to rally around. They talked about how the original Arabic had no vowels, so it may have been a similar word meaning "messiah." In other words, this was an invented messiah to give the Arab people credibility. The thing is, this is a biography after the fact. Before that, the Arab people were using coins that said «MHMD» and had crosses on them. So the ruler that the Arabs actually originally accepted was the Messiah, JESUS. It was only after receiving false dogma from the Catholic church that they became barbaric puppets bent on conquest for the sake of the enemies of Christ. In fact, Muhammad the person likely never existed. It's simple logic. Not only is the time frame between when Muhammad supposedly existed and when we first find historical evidence too long (as though he was made up as a folk hero over time), but if he really was the charismatic final prophet they claim, then his words should be untouchable. But this is not how things are, instead we have his teachings able to be abrogated. We see this pattern another place, with the Jewish Talmud and rabbinic decisions. In other words, Islam is a group consensus project, where the mob decided to turn away from GOD and worship a group of moon deities, rewriting their teachings over time to justify their descent into paganism. Regardless, the supposedly-existing Muhammad was also rejected by the Jews, as well he should have been.

There was also Mani who worked to spread Manichaeism, a religion based on the idea that the physical world is a creation of darkness and the spiritual world is from light. As Mani traveled, he claimed to be a Christian, Buddhist, or Zoroastrian based on the land he was in. So yeah, he was a

disingenuous liar trying to spread his teachings under any banner he could, and so also were his followers. In regard to Jewish and Christian ideas, this meant that JESUS, the Messiah, was some sort of being of light come to purify this world of evil. Or something like that. But GOD created this Earth and he called it very good. The fact that evil exists in this world does not mean this world is evil. It simply means that this world is subject to the decisions of humans. Anyway, Manichaeism eventually tapered off in the Islamic world, in the Western world as a result of church orthodoxy and creeds, and in the Eastern world as a result of competition with Taoism and Buddhism.

None of these could be the Messiah for the Jews. Why not? Because they were not able to redeem Israel from its sin, and thus none of them could restore it as a nation, nor free it from its enemies, not rebuild its worship of GOD, whether in a temple or only synagogues. This is because of a text: "Who has ascended to heaven and come down? Who has gathered the wind in His hands? Who has bound up the waters in His cloak? Who has established all the ends of the earth? What is His name, and what is the name of His Son? Surely you know!" Because they believe that GOD is the same as Yahweh, they are deceived by a Canaanite idol of the physical world, and they fixate on treasures and longevity as a reward for their actions, but overlook GOD who brings meaning. They focus on laws and not on relationship, on lifeless things, and not what gives life. And this is why, when JESUS came to bring life to them, they could only think of sending him to death, for he offended against their laws written on stone for people with hearts of stone. So it was that they rejected him as GOD's son. But if they reject that JESUS is GOD's son, then this passage must refer to Israel itself. This means that for the Jews, salvation from sin presents a special problem. For their sins, they must willingly sacrifice as a people for the sins of their whole people. Of course, the Jews have never willingly done so, but there is a way that this is fulfilled anyway. How? Well, by obedience to the law. The Jewish people during all this time, refused to be anything but Jewish. By setting themselves apart, they became Corban.[1054] Some Jews died when the temple of Herod was destroyed, and some were killed in the years after that by one Roman ruler or another. Still others died in pogroms against them, including by Christians themselves. For example, in the Black Plague, the Jews kept themselves clean and thus were spared the worst of the infection, causing people to believe they were the *cause* of it. But most importantly was the Holocaust itself. Hitler, a depraved man who blamed Jews for everything including not having his art exhibits accepted, set about to wipe the Jews from the face of Earth. But Hitler's attempts to destroy them became the instrument of their redemption from sin. This means that when, instead of dyeing their hair blond and pretending to be Gentile, they wore the *Juden* star and headed off to the gas chamber, they became a burnt offering (Holocaust) on behalf of the state of Israel.

The United Nations insists that Israel is somehow illegitimate. Nonsense, how much more legitimate can you get than having a nation built on the sacrifices of their own ancestors? Even if all that persecution is worth nothing, they still have more claim to the land than those who took it! Even so, GOD will redeem their land and people, regardless of what the powers of this Earth believe. For GOD has given them a Messiah, and this Messiah is *among* them. And it is through this Messiah that the people of Israel restore their nation.

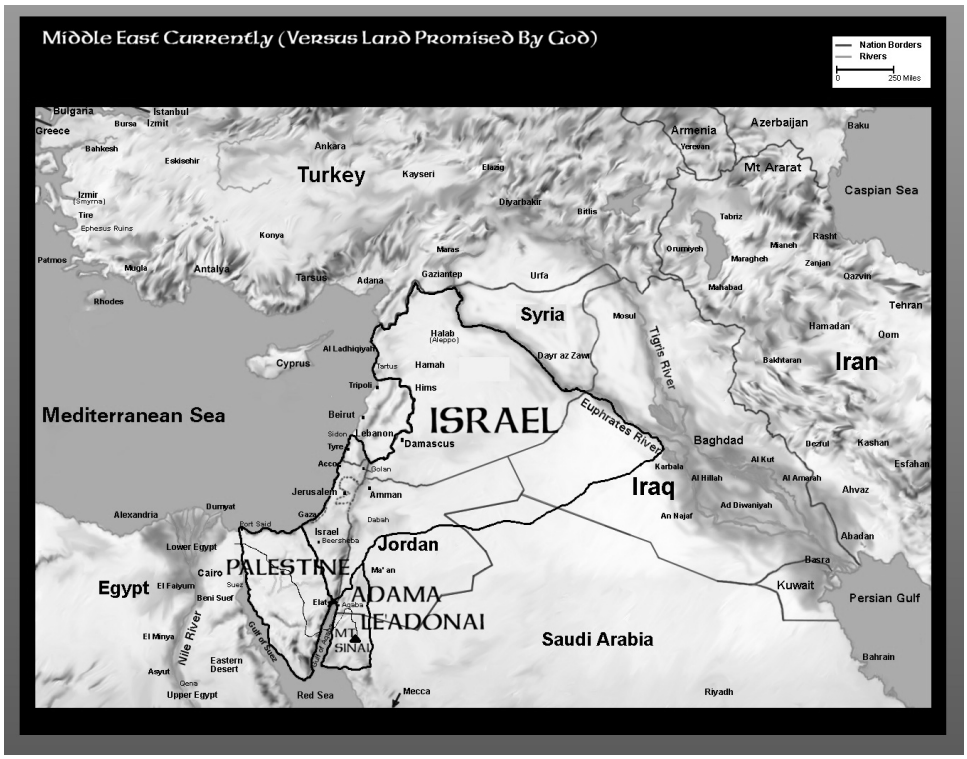
FROM SEA TO SHINING SEA

The land of Israel has a massive falsehood told about its borders. Let me explain. Israel ran afoul of Rome when it rebelled against the power of those who at the time considered themselves the rulers of the world. As we know, GOD is the true ruler of the this world, but elected (and unelected) leaders will always pretend to rule things. So it was that Israel rebelled in earnest under the leadership of their "messiah" Bar Kochba, after the emperor named Publius Aelius Hadrianus (Hadrian, for short) decided to rename Jerusalem as Aelia Capitolina, and this caused unrest, to put it mildly. Far more of the Roman forces that should be thought necessary for such a small region[1055] were brought in order to punish Israel, after which its remaining Jewish inhabitants were driven out with attempts to return by punishment of death, and the land was renamed. Hadrian wanted the people to forget where their

[1054] As stated before, Corban means to be set aside or sacred, as a sacrifice or offering to GOD.

[1055] Even though the LORD was mad at Israel for their treatment of his Messiah, they were still his people, and GOD was not about to make matters easy for their enemies.

native land even was, and if possible, to lose all connection with their culture. So he named it Syria Palæstina, effectively reverting it to the land of Syria and the land of the Philistines (note the similarities between the two words. But this wasn't the only fraud that went down. Look at a map of the Middle East, and you'll find that Medina[1056] to be halfway down into Saudi Arabia in the region just above Mecca. If Israel were to ask for the land near Medina to worship in Mount Sinai, they would be asking too much, taking an enormous of Saudi Arabia's coastline. Obviously, nobody would oblige that. As I was editing this book, I was confused for the longest time, until I saw this map. It might have been a three day trip to go to this Midian, but not to the one called Medina today.
Likewise, the area between Egypt and Israel is falsely called the "Sinai Peninsula", and because the Jewish people are as confused as I was, at one point they tried to take this area.
That is to say, the present day enemies of Israel have disguised not only the land of Israel itself but the places of worship within its lands. Today, the United Nations treats Israel as an unlawful state, and regards any effort to secure its own borders as an act of war. Clearly, they are heirs to the Romans.
The enemies of Israel say things like "from the river[1057] to the sea,[1058] Palestine will be free." Really?!? Free from what? Israel is not enslaving you. What they really mean is to drive all Jews in Israel into the water to drown them like rats.
Tell you what. If you honestly believe that Israel is trapping you, I propose a new plan. You have heard it said, "from the river to the sea," but I tell you, as with America, "from sea to shining sea."[1059] If Israel's enemies were actually serious about peace in the Middle East, it would be an easy thing to rezone borders. The original land promised to Abraham included from the waters of Egypt to the Euphrates River. Because there is some dispute on which waters of Egypt is meant (there is a river at Israel's current western border called the Brook of Egypt), the land that is currently called the "Sinai Peninsula" (the Hebrews crossed at the gulf of Aqaba, not in that area) can be given to Palestine. After all, these are a fake people, why not give them a fake holy land?



[1056] Where one assumes is the original land of Midian.
[1057] The Jordan River.
[1058] The Mediterranean Sea.
[1059] The Red Sea to the Mediterranean Sea.

I've always thought the land where they visited Mount Sinai ought to belong to Israel, giving Israel a nice southern beachfront. In any case, their actual promised land is rather massive. Alternatively, the southern area can be a buffer state, not owned by anyone, but rather is a place where all can travel for tourism or worship. This land would be set aside for the LORD, a land lacking in governments, economy, and all things that the LORD probably despises. The only people allowed to live there are those who secure the borders from those who shed blood or take land, and those who care for wanderers who are hungry and thirsty. The surrounding lands maintain such charity. As for the land, it is to be called *Adama Le'Adonai* (האדמה שייכת לאדון).[1060]
It is the LORD who Abraham and Isaac encountered, who wrestled with Jacob, who saved Daniel's friends from the furnace and Daniel from the lion's den. The LORD has promised this land to Israel, so my hope is also that the LORD shall has a land of his own, to live together with the people of Israel as a neighbor. That the land of Adama Le'Adonai shall be the home of GOD, where visitors remember the Sukkot, and so also the LORD shall visit Israel and be her GOD. No longer will we use words like 'LORD'[1061] in that day, but 'DEAREST.'[1062]

THE EASTERN GATE

The East Gate has a rather rich history to it, so I thought I'd talk about it to explain why I believe we are living in the Eternal Kingdom of GOD. The gate is sealed with two entries called Bab-El Tobeh (Gate of Repentance) or Bab-El Rammeh (Gate of Mercy), and it is believed that when JESUS comes again in the final judgement, it will open. But is that the case? Well, history doesn't bear this out.
The East Gate is first mentioned when Nehemiah rebuilt the walls of Jerusalem. Shemaiah the son of Shechaniah, the keeper of the East Gate, made repairs to it, and had the task of creating a path from the Mount of Olives toward the temple itself. It was a path mainly reserved for special sacrifices (a sacrificial lamb was to be brought on the holiday of *Yom Kippur*, or Day of Atonement). Zechariah foretold that the Messiah would enter it riding on a donkey. The interesting part of this is that effectively the Messiah entered the gate not as the Jews believed, to claim authority to oust the Romans, but for its actual purpose to offer himself as a special sacrifice for Repentance and Mercy (as the gates says) for the forgiveness of sins and the renewal of the world. Ezekiel has this to say, "Then He brought me back to the outer gate of the sanctuary which faces toward the east, but it was shut. And the LORD said to me, 'This gate will be shut; it will not be opened, and no man will enter by it, because the LORD GOD of Israel has entered by it; therefore it will be shut." He tells that only the prince of the LORD is able to enter on feast days, and eat in the presence of the LORD.
But it doesn't say "when the LORD comes again in final judgement" or anything like that. Instead, it talks about him entering and eating in GOD's presence, as thought this were a semi-regular occurrence. In other words, the occasion for such event is for visitation and worship, not because of judgement or even some idea of utopia. Instead, this Earth is GOD's Eternal Kingdom, but we are also to regard it as rejected by men. In other words, in physics, we talk about how a glass of water is simultaneously intact and filled with crystal clear water, and shattered on the floor. It is only through our actions (i.e. knocking it over, or catching the glass as it falls) that it is one or the other. As such, throughout history, the gate has been open and closed at different times. So let's talk about the history that leads to my conclusion.
First, why was the gate rebuilt in the time of Nehemiah? Well, prior to that, the Jews had fallen into idolatry and been exiled, and the presence of the LORD had left Jerusalem, so prophets like Ezekiel wondered if it would ever come back. For this reason, the Jewish remnant used to pray at this gate instead of the Wailing Wall.[1063]
In 810 AD, this was shut away by the Muslims, then reopened by the Crusaders in 1102 AD when they retook the city from Islam, then it was closed again by the Muslim leader Saladin in 1187 AD. Finally, Sultan Suleiman sealed it shut in 1547 AD. The Muslims sealed the gate to prevent any false Messiah

---

[1060] Literally, "The Land Belongs To The LORD."
[1061] LORD is all too readily similar to the word Baal.
[1062] Language matters. Even the word 'Husband' is too similar to Baal in Hebrew, indicating a master/servant relationship, not a union of two people who are deeply in love with each other.
[1063] The Jews are praying at the wrong gate. The Wailing Wall has nothing to do with anything. It is a leftover chunk regarded as sacred, because the Jews still idolize the temple.

candidates. The Muslims were so afraid of Jews opening, that they put a graveyard in the way of the entrance, figuring that Hebrew purity laws would prevent entry through such a place.
But we know from history that it has prevented nothing. The LORD came through it (as JESUS) riding on a donkey, and has sealed it (through Muhammad and his followers). Indeed, several failed attempts have been made to open it. In the 20th century, two separate attempts were made to open it. In 1917, General Allenby wanted to take the city, but the Arab leader called Grand Mufti had ordered all gates to be sealed. Since he wanted to enter, he ordered his men to reopen the East Gate. As they were about to pick up their sledgehammers, Allenby's plane flew over the city dropping leaflets telling the inhabitants to flee. Apparently the name in Arabic looked too much like "Allah's man" so it freaked them out. In any case, there was no need to open the gate because everyone fled. The second time was in 1967. King Hussein of Jordan had conquered the old city in 1948, and wanted to build an Arab hotel for pilgrims, closing off the Western Wall to Jewish worship forever. The hotel would then be built over the entrance to Temple Mount, but he needed another means of entry for Muslims to access the Al-Aqsa mosque. So he ordered the East Gate opened. Before the workmen could start, though, Israeli jets flew out of underground bases, and the Six Day War started, ultimately delivering Israel into the hands of the Jews. Amazingly, this gate was not damaged during the war, and stands even to this day.
In this way, GOD used his people and even his enemies to protect this gate for two thousand years. He may open it one day (and you are allowed to watch and wait for such a time), or he may keep it sealed for all time. This is not the important part, but that today we understand that the LORD has come to this Earth on behalf of our sins, and we ought not waste out time wailing at walls but worship the LORD in spirit and in truth. History has rises and falls, but worship of the LORD is our priority. In some eras, the world might be secular, while others might have a religious revival. Lands form or wear away, countries thrive or are overthrown. But regardless, GOD rules this world. We think that GOD's presence has left the temple, and we need to wait for him to come back. But this a lie. It is *we* who have turned our backs on JESUS and allowed wicked tenants to pretend to rule this world. Whether the gate opens or not is secondary. We are living in the Eternal Kingdom of GOD. Good times and bad times may therefore befall us, but GOD is with us.

The Great Resolution
17TH TAMMUZ

It is a minor fast. It seems. A fast day of the fourth month leading up to the greater festival of Tisha B'Av, and after the Feast of Weeks. It is a lonely fast in a month where nothing much happens, since Tisha B'Av is actually part of the next month. Online research says, "The month of Tammuz does not have major festivals like other months in the Jewish calendar, but it includes the 17th of Tammuz," as though its existence is an afterthought, not even worthy to be called significant. It is not celebrated at all by Gentiles, while some celebrate Sukkot (if not in fact, as Thanksgiving) and Easter and Pentecost are framed around Passover and the Feast of Weeks respectively. Indeed, it is seen as mainly a fast for the especially devout, or to be remembered by rabbis.
But the LORD made himself born in a lowly manger. The minor things are not too low for him.
So what is this fast, and why should we remember it? Well, it is the closest thing to the Day of the LORD that we humans know about. This is day when the LORD has worked his power, for good or ill. On this day, Moses broke the commandments and destroyed the golden calf. On this day, the Babylonian siege of Jerusalem was such that no animals could be sacrificed. On this day, the city walls of Jerusalem were opened to Rome, allowing the destruct of the temple on the day of Tisha B'Av. On this day, a scroll of the Torah was burned, leading to the Bar Kokhba Revolt. And on this day, an idol was set up near the temple grounds.
This fast is celebrated with reading of the Amidah (a series of blessings while standing)

> *O LORD, open thou my lips; and my mouth shall show forth thy praise. Blessed are You, O LORD our GOD and GOD of our fathers, the GOD of Abraham, the GOD of Isaac and the GOD of Jacob, the great, mighty and revered GOD, the Most High GOD who bestows loving kindness, the Creator of all, who recalls the good deeds of the fathers and who brings a Redeemer to their children's*

children for his name's sake, in love. O king, helper, savior and shield. Blessed are You, O LORD, the shield of Abraham.
You, O LORD, are mighty forever, You are the Reviver of the Dead. You are greatly able to save. You sustain the living in loving kindness, You revive the dead with great compassion, You support the falling, heal the sick, set free the bound and keep faith with those who sleep in the dust. Who is like You, O Master of mighty deeds? Who compares to You, a king who puts to death and restores to life, and brings forth salvation? And You are faithful to revive the dead. Blessed are You, O LORD, who revives the dead.
You are holy and your Name is holy, and your holy ones praise You every day. Blessed are You, Adonai, the GOD Who is holy.
You show favor to a man of knowledge, and You teach understanding to a mortal man. Be gracious to us; a mind of understanding and intellect is from You. Blessed are You, Adonai, Who favors us with knowledge.
Return us, our Father, to Your Torah; draw us near our King to serve You. Restore us to Your presence in complete repentance. Blessed are You, O LORD, Who desires repentance.
Forgive us, our Father, for we have sinned; pardon us, our King, for we have rebelled; for You are a pardoner and a forgiver. Blessed are you, LORD, the gracious One who abundantly forgives.
Behold our affliction and champion our cause, and redeem us speedily for the sake of Thy Name. Blessed are You, LORD, Redeemer of Israel.
Heal us, O LORD, and we shall be healed; save us, and we will be saved, for the one we praise is You. Bring complete healing for all our sicknesses, for O GOD, for You are our faithful and compassionate Healer and King. Blessed are you, LORD, the Healer of the sick of Israel.
Bless for us, Adonai our GOD, this year and its crops. Grant us a blessing on the earth. Satisfy us from Thy bounty and bless our year like other good years. Blessed are You, O LORD, Who blesses the years.
Sound the great shofar for our freedom and raise a banner to gather our exiles and unite us together from the four corners of the earth. Blessed are You, LORD, who regathers the scattered of His people Israel.
Restore our judges as at the early times, and advisors as there once were. Remove our sorrows and troubles: we want You, Adonai, to rule over us with kindness and compassion and to justify us in justice. Blessed are You, LORD, the King Who loves righteousness and justice.
And for slanderers let there be no hope, and may all the evil in an instant be destroyed and all Thy enemies be cut down swiftly; and the evil ones uproot and break and destroy and humble soon in our days. Blessed art You, LORD, who breaks down enemies and humbles sinners.
Upon the righteous, upon the pious, upon the elders of your people of the house of Israel, upon the remnant of their scholars, upon the righteous converts, and upon ourselves, may Your compassion arise, O LORD our GOD, and give good reward to all who sincerely believe in your Name. Include us with them forever, and let us not be ashamed, for we put our trust in You. Blessed are You, LORD, the stronghold and assurance of the righteous.
Return in compassion to Your city, Jerusalem, and rest within it as You have said. Rebuild it speedily, and in our days, a structure forever. And may You establish the throne of David within Jerusalem speedily. Blessed are You, LORD, the Builder of Jerusalem.
May the Seed of David Thy servant flourish speedily and may You exalt in Your salvation. For in your salvation do we hope all the day. Blessed are You, LORD, Who brings forth the Horn of our salvation.
Hear our voice, O LORD our GOD, and have pity and mercy upon us and accept in mercy and in favor our prayer, for You are a GOD Who hears prayers and supplications. Do not turn us away from before You empty, for in mercy You hear the prayer of Your people Israel. Blessed are You, LORD, Who hears prayer.
Accept Your people, O LORD our GOD, and receive their prayer. Restore the most holy service of Your house and accept in love the offerings and prayers of Israel. May it please You always to want to accept the service of Your people Israel. May our eyes see You return to Zion in mercy.

Blessed are You, O LORD, Who restores His Presence to Zion.
We thank You, for it is You alone Who is Adonai our GOD and the GOD of our fathers, forever and ever. You are the Rock and Shield of our salvation, You alone, from generation to generation. We thank You and tell of Your praise, for our lives are in Your hands and our souls are trusting in You. Every day Your miracles are with us: Your wonders and favors are at all times, evening, morning, and afternoon. O Good One, Your compassions are never exhausted and Your kindnesses are continual. We put our hope in You.
Grant peace, goodness, blessing, grace, kindness, and compassion upon us and upon all of Your people Israel. Bless us, our Father, all of us as one, with the light of Your face, for with the light of Your face You gave to us, Adonai our GOD, the Torah of life and love of kindness, righteousness, blessing, compassion, life, and peace. And may it be good in Your eyes to bless Your people Israel at every time and at every hour with Your peace. Blessed art You, LORD, Who blesses His people Israel with peace.
May He who makes peace in His high places make peace for us, and for all Israel. And say ye, Amen.

and also the Avinu Malkeinu,

Our Father, our King, we have sinned before You.
Our Father, our King, we have no King but You.
Our Father, our King, act [benevolently] with us for the sake of Your Name.
Our Father, our King, renew for us (on fast days: bless us with) a good year.
Our Father, our King, a good year.
Our Father, our King, remove from us all harsh decrees.
Our Father, our King, annul the intentions of our enemies.
Our Father, our King, foil the plans of our foes.
Our Father, our King, wipe out every oppressor and adversary from against us.
Our Father, our King, close the mouths of our adversaries and accusers.
Our Father, our King, remove pestilence, sword, famine, captivity, and destruction from the members of Your covenant.
Our Father, our King, withhold the plague from Your inheritance.
Our Father, our King, pardon and forgive all our iniquities.
Our Father, our King, blot out and remove our transgressions from before Your eyes.
Our Father, our King, erase in Your abounding mercies all the records of our sins.
Our Father, our King, bring us back to You in wholehearted repentance.
Our Father, our King, send a complete healing to the sick of Your people.
Our Father, our King, rend the evil [aspect] of the verdict decreed against us.
Our Father, our King, remember us with a favorable remembrance before You.
Our Father, our King, inscribe us in the book of good life.
Our Father, our King, inscribe us in the book of redemption and deliverance.
Our Father, our King, inscribe us in the book of livelihood and sustenance.
Our Father, our King, inscribe us in the book of merits.
Our Father, our King, inscribe us in the book of pardon and forgiveness.
Our Father, our King, remember us for a good life.
Our Father, our King, remember us for redemption and deliverance.
Our Father, our King, remember us for livelihood and sustenance.
Our Father, our King, remember us for merits.
Our Father, our King, remember us for pardon and forgiveness.
Our Father, our King, cause deliverance to flourish for us soon.
Our Father, our King, exalt the glory of Israel Your people.
Our Father, our King, exalt the glory of Your anointed one.
Our Father, our King, fill our hands with Your blessings.
Our Father, our King, fill our storehouses with plenty.
Our Father, our King, hear our voice, have pity and compassion upon us.
Our Father, our King, accept our prayer with mercy and with favor.

Our Father, our King, open the gates of heaven to our prayer.
Our Father, our King, let it be remembered that we are but dust.
Our Father, our King, we beseech You, do not turn us away from You empty-handed.
Our Father, our King, may this hour be an hour of mercy and a time of favor before You.
Our Father, our King, have compassion upon us, and upon our infants and children.
Our Father, our King, do it for the sake of those who were slain for Your holy Name.
Our Father, our King, do it for the sake of those who were slaughtered for Your Oneness.
Our Father, our King, do it for the sake of those who went through fire and water for the sanctification of Your Name.
Our Father, our King, avenge the spilled blood of Your servants.
Our Father, our King, do it for Your sake, if not for ours.
Our Father, our King, do it for Your sake, and deliver us.
Our Father, our King, do it for the sake of Your abounding mercies.
Our Father, our King, do it for the sake of Your great, mighty and awesome Name which is proclaimed over us.
Our Father, our King, be gracious to us and answer us, for we have no meritorious deeds; deal charitably and kindly with us and deliver us.

in addition to regular prayers.

Now, you'll notice there is a general feeling of mourning here, with the Jewish people believing nothing good can come of this day. But keep in mind that on the seventeenth day of the second and seventh month, Noah's Ark flooded and stopped. The LORD makes misfortune and fortune, as Isaiah says. And Zechariah tells us that the various fasts will be turned from days of mourning to occasions of joy and gladness. We already have an inkling of this. Today, at the time of writing, it is the 17th of Tammuz, July 2nd, or the 250th anniversary of declaring independence from Britain. This is not a mournful event, this is something to celebrate, a liberation of bonds. And the loosing of bonds is a Jubilee or fifty year event. Further, in 1776, do you know when the 17th of Tammuz was? July 4th. This day is considered liminal or boundary event, where boundaries are broken, for better or worse. And Tisha B'Av is considered the end result, where formerly the temple of Jerusalem fell. Indeed, nations may fall, people may fall, but as the LORD cares for us, we can survive whatever life brings.

THE DARKNESS AND THE LIGHT

CHAPTER 1

Ages have passed since the last writing.

In the gap, Roman Catholicism claimed it was the only real Christianity, and began to tell people about how it was necessary to earn grace. Yet grace is freely given, and subject to the whims of GOD. We cannot say to GOD that he must forgive us, any more than we can declare that GOD will not forgive us. For this is blasphemy against *Ruach ha Kodesh*.

Nor were the idols that represented saints, relics, and icons anything but. The Early Christians wandered the land, preaching the Gospel at risk to life and to limb, and even to happiness. They took up their cross and followed.

The false convert that was Constantine declared that priests not JESUS could forgive sins, that Mary rather than JESUS could intercede on our behalf, that the Pope rather than JESUS is the High Priest as ordained by Peter.

Let us not talk about the sale of indulgences, and the upheaval and holy wars that followed.

They also canonized many of the scriptures, so I have had to tear out even more heavy-handedly than Martin Luther.

Will I call Catholicism the anti-Christ and seek a final war to stop them? Not at all. I have gone to Catholic services. I simply refuse to bow when Mary's name is called, or pay attention to saints.

CHAPTER 2

In the gap, Judaism has hardened their hearts.

As to the Jews, they have built a case as to why JESUS cannot be the Messiah. Excuses after excuses are presented as to why JESUS cannot be the Christ. But these excuses are based on unrealistic expectations, not on reality. They are based on the notion that the Messiah is a warrior, not a prophet.

In truth, the Jews haven't gotten past the idea that GOD made them a Chosen People but did not intend for everyone else to be damned. Yet GOD loved this world and its living things, even the sparrows. And even the farm animals were mentioned in Jonah, that GOD desired to save along with the people of Ninevah.
Nor has atheism found an ally in Christianity. Nor has Islam.
Yet I do not make war against Jews or atheists. I have atheist and Jewish friends.
I will not lose friends by pushing too hard to convert them. But neither will I stand for being converted.

CHAPTER 3

If we were to believe in Revelation, I could maybe say that atheists were using technology (vaccines, for example) to bring about the Mark of the Beast. Or we could say that a Jewish or Muslim takeover of Christianity was a sure sign of end times. Or we could say that the Pope was the Antichrist.
Yet I do not believe in Revelation. I stopped when I realized that it failed the test proposed by Galatians, that it appeared to be calling Christianity itself a synagogue of Satan, and that it depicted the violent murder of every living thing. Twice.
A careful read of Revelation reveals that the "worthy" get to go to this New Heaven and New Earth, while the sinners are tossed into a lake of fire. Yet other scripture reveals that *all* of us are sinners and there are *none* worthy. Moreover, remember that number that was super-important that we are not to forget (six hundred and sixty-six)? Well not only does the number not match in other copies (some of them say six hundred and sixteen), but no explanation for those numbers is ever given. This is a large portion of why I put no stock in numerology. Numbers don't mean *anything* unless we assign meanings to them (such as four meaning "death" in Chinese).
End times sects are not unique to Christianity. Jews believe their Messiah will drive outsiders away from Israel at the very least, rebuild the Temple, and resume sacrifices... those poor animals. I have already discussed how, while GOD does allow eating of virtually any meat, he also cares for animals. Even though this is significantly less violent than the apocalyptic notions of Islam, which would prefer to make all lands Islam, believing that this would bring peace. Their apocalypse involves breaking the cross and put an end to the existence of pigs. But anyway, there is another issue. Suppose Muslims make all of one country Muslim. They think they would be at peace. However, this doesn't happen. When you see everyone as an enemy, you cannot make friends even among your own people. Trust is gone.
Likewise, all secular dictatorships have historically collapsed under their own excesses. Machiavelli describes this, that he thinks that it is better to be feared than loved by one's subjects. Yet worse still is to be hated, which a leader can avoid by not taking property or messing with women. In other words, a despot cannot be too soft or too hard. Too soft, they waste money, and the oligarchs that set up the dictatorship usually will have them "commit suicide" twelve times in the chest. On the other hand, gross oppression usually creates a revolt against them. This means they don't take real risks, so there is a slow bleed to death.
Human beings make war with GOD and each other. This is the idea behind Revelation, a final revolt and GOD punishes our sinfulness. But it's an idea based on a falsehood. We humans are not capable of making war with a being that can forgive even our worst sins.

CHAPTER 4

What then is The Darkness? What should we be afraid of?
The secular alarmist sometimes hold up a plague killing all of us. Or climate change. Or nuclear war. Or meteors.
Those with religion look to their belief sets, pointing to some forecast about end times. Both sides see the other as evil.
An often quoted idea is that "The greatest trick of the devil has is to convince us that he doesn't exist." The impression is that there are massively organized forces of evil, led by Satan.
Sorry, but you got it wrong. Satan is an Accuser. He is an angel whose primary purpose is to act as prosecutor, solely for the benefit of our diseased minds plagued by knowledge of good and evil. His greatest trick, then, is to accuse GOD.
Because by accusing GOD, he can undermine our sense of what GOD wants. He can convince people

that even GOD is evil, that GOD wants to punish us. His second, greatest trick is pretending to be GOD, leading others in crazed and violent paths against each other, thinking that GOD favors us, and condemns them.

But we aren't really on trial here. We imagine being in a room where GOD sits on an imposing throne, JESUS and Satan act as lawyers concerning the case against our lives. Pay no attention to the man behind the curtain! If we were to look back there, we'd see the real face of JESUS. We would see this trial as the sham it is. We are still in the garden of Eden. But we suffer from the *great delusion* of knowing good and evil. For in knowing good and evil, we confuse our allies and accusers.

CHAPTER 5

We are hooked on praying against our enemies. I looked in Psalms, and wound up removing most of them. It isn't simply that they run far too long. Psalms has far too many prayers against enemies. While I could talk about how this separates us from GOD, is totally unforgivable, and so on, I would just be setting up a new moral system, trying to get you to throw away an old one.

Walking away from the law doesn't solve the problem of the law. We confess our sins, we accept grace when we fail, and we understand that the law is designed to be perversely impossible to keep. Galatians instructs us about the "freedom" of lawlessness, compared to the freedom under Christ. So I will instead distract you.

Instead of telling you not to break laws, I will encourage you. Take up your cross and follow Christ. "Golly," you say, "that sounds hard!" Well it is, and it isn't.

I am transgender, and sincerely wish that one day this world will be such that I can fully present as female, as much as I want, without too much trouble. Yet I'm conservative, and struggle with shyness and a body that resists me. I also have issues with poverty, and foot problems that interfere with my exercise. I try when I can to do what would make the way easier for others.

Others might be the first black or first Asian tennis player. Or they fight for the rights of certain people.

But this doesn't only mean "let your freak flag fly" or always involve progressive mindset. It is risking ostracism, making enemies, even death, to take a stand for what you believe in. Whatever it is that you care about, GOD wants you to pursue it. Probably.

CHAPTER 6

The Bible has a number of instances where GOD seems to kill people for no reason. For example, in the book of Judges, Jephthah foolishly made a vow to GOD for victory in battle in exchange for sacrificing the first thing he saw. Because of this, he had to sacrifice his own daughter. Or waiting forty days in order to give the law, by which point some of the people gave up and turned to idolatry. Or declaring bans on war spoils after people had been wandering in the desert for years. Or killing by snake because they complained. GOD even killed people as they were bearing the ark of the covenant, which was supposed to protect them in battle.

All these things point to a GOD that is either impotent, evil, insane, or those who follow GOD clearly do not understand what he wants.

Let's examine the first. Heaven and Earth clearly did not arise on their own. So if the one worshiped by the Jews is not GOD, then clearly whoever is the real GOD is not impotent. As for evil, such a false "GOD" would be more like Allah, leading his followers to violence for violence sake. But GOD did not behave this way. He led his people from idolatry into theism, from violence into a life of peace. And he sent himself as JESUS on behalf of our sins. So this just leads the latter two.

Is GOD insane? Well this is a difficult question. A better description is quirky. We have within us the knowledge of good and evil. This means that our perception of GOD is like a broken window. Those who accuse GOD see him as bad, while those who worship GOD put him on a pedestal. All of which leads us to the last, that we have gone horribly horribly wrong with our understanding of GOD. Instead of seeing GOD as an omnipotent egomaniac, as the atheists do, or master that we are slave to as the Jews do, we remember that we are made in GOD's image. We are GOD's beloved, yet were are blinded by things like rituals, sacrifices, and laws. We forget mercy and to love others. It is entirely possible that these laws are manmade, aside from maybe the Ten Commandments. But especially senseless laws about diet or dress code. Laws should be about mercy.

CHAPTER 7

What is the purpose of hardship? Well there are a couple of theories, mainly that hardship is either punishment for wrongdoing, or a source of character. But GOD brings good and evil to all. Good to remind us of his blessing, and evil in order to remind us that suffering brings us closer to our friends and to JESUS. It is also to remind us that life is not "safe" or "perfect" but rather messy. Darkness gives us something to strive for, or rather to strive against. And so it is that Isaiah tells us that GOD brings light as well as darkness. This is also another way we know Revelation is a fraud, because it proposes an end to death. But death is a part of life. Instead of some punishment fantasy where GOD then does away with death (and only for those considered righteous), we need to instead remember that life is intended as a relationship, a marriage to GOD. For better or worse.

Years ago, I read a webcomic called *Gaia*, from the creators of *Sandra and Woo*. One of the main characters asked the priest why there is evil in the world. She was told that a perfect world describes a dollhouse, and that the suffering caused by wrong decisions is the price for new wonders every day. I have called this the Eternal Kingdom of GOD, but it is often misunderstood that eternal means static, like a piece of plastic that lasts without change 500 years or so. A better way of thinking of this is that eternal things "never get old." They are always learning and growing. This world is built on the interplay between light and darkness.

CHAPTER 8

There may come hard times. And we should be prepared for them. There may be good times. We must take the good with the bad. And we must understand that fear makes things worse.

The rise of plastic use was supposedly because the trees were all going to be cut down. Now there is sometimes far too much plastic. The recycling of plastic was supposed to save the environment. But it wound up on barges head to China for recycling, and some fell overboard. Or China rejected it. Now the oceans is filled with plastic. California has banned plastic straws and bags. So the homeless defecated in the streets instead of bags. Now their streets are filled with filth. Whatever we do, we surround ourselves with filth and waste. Sin is all around us. But the origin of sin is our fear.

Do not be afraid. This is stressed by angels, but now you understand. When you fear, darkness prevails. There may be all the appearance of a Mark of the Beast. Ignore or refuse it, and continue with your life. There may be times when the church itself refuses to have community with you. Find a church that will connect. There may be big governments that impose harsh rules on economy or society or even dress code. There may be times when people refuse to let you speak your truth, whether aloud or in print. Do not give up. Do not fear. For everything they do is against themselves. The more restrictive things are, the less it promotes productive members, and in turn the less it creates prosperity. They may even come for you. Do not fear, for JESUS raised from the dead.

It's not the end of the world.

CHAPTER 9

Why does evil seem to win? But it doesn't. Darkness only appears to prevail. Darkness is like a thick cloud that hides not not only the truth of its activities, but also convinces the public to stand in fear and awe of them. Like Nimrod, it seeks to use tyranny to convince others to stop worshiping GOD. Yet neither Satan nor his followers are as powerful as they come across.

Speak then, truth to power. When one speaks truth in an atmosphere of perceived power, one undermines such power. This is why JESUS was killed. Indeed, he exposed the temple of Herod as monstrous. Indeed, there is a risk of one's life. But it is a fight that must be made. It is important to expose corruption and evil before it becomes entrenched. But even if evil seems to win, we live in GOD's kingdom. There are hardships, there is darkness, but evil falls under its own weight or its lies are exposed.

Even an evil government like China with its tanks was once stopped by a single man carrying groceries who refused to let them pass. Darkness is actually weak. It borrows its power from light that does not shine brightly.[1064]

CHAPTER 10

What is the goal of evil? It seems the evil are lead by those who are not human. For evil hates humanity so strongly that it can only be embraced by the self-loathing, and the likes of demons.

[1064] In other words, darkness is empowered by good people who allow themselves to be intimidated.

Revelation should be viewed as false prophecy, but also as the playbook of evil men. They seek to return mankind to the state of beasts, branded and controlled at all times. They seek to erase mankind's memory of JESUS's death and resurrection. But here is the most important part. They seek to cover over JESUS's return not by brutal suppression, for martyrdom only makes Christianity stronger, but by convincing us that we have to wait for JESUS to return.

But JESUS ***has*** returned. He came back when he raised from the dead. JESUS lives. This is why Revelation should be ignored. Not only are the warnings about evil irrelevant (seeing other people as evil pits us against each other rather than focusing on evil institutions, "for we struggle not against flesh and blood...") but it covers over our understanding of what the Bible is meant to be.

CHAPTER 11

People often justify Revelation, claiming that it's a book of hope. They point to how it shows that even when the world is ending, GOD is with the believers. That's nice. And indeed that part is true enough that it tries to legitimize the rest. But the fact of the matter is, there is nothing particularly edifying about this text, filled with punishment of those who didn't follow rules, filled with JESUS behaving quite different from the forgiveness he showed on the cross. They usually claim around then, that Revelation is about GOD's mercy running out. Does that make sense though? Is mercy a limited resource? Didn't JESUS himself mention, when asked, "Should you forgive seven times?" he instead said, "Not seven times but seventy times seven." This didn't mean you should stop at four hundred and ninety times of forgiveness, but that we should stop keeping count.

If we, who try and fail at forgiving others ought to be like that, how can JESUS make this standard if GOD himself does not follow it? But this remains, without hope that GOD is by our side even during the ending of the world, how can we have hope?

I do not believe in end times, but it would have been sufficient simply to say that when the Jews were threatened but the Egyptians, Babylonians, and the Romans, that GOD was with them.[1065] It would have been sufficient to talk about JESUS and his love. It would have been sufficient that Romans tells us nothing will separate us from GOD. But this message goes *beyond* the Bible. The Runaway Bunny has a small rabbit try to run from its mother, but the mother tells him that nowhere it could go would take it away from her. Recently, on the radio, I listened to a song called "I'll Stand By You" by the Pretenders. Could you imagine JESUS saying these lyrics? Because I could. GOD is there for us in the night, in our darkest hour, and nothing we could confess would make GOD love us any less. GOD is with us, always. Even in our deepest darkness. We may not always see him, but this is about our blindness, not GOD.

JESUS may come to reign, or we may see what appears to be the Antichrist (never mind that we are taught there are anti-Christs, plural). But keep this in mind. It is our perception that creates such things. We fear what GOD will do in our lives, so things appear to be a threat to us. Our minds accuse GOD, and so his will looks to us like tyranny. Sin is the real tyranny though, and GOD has come to set us free. Revelation is a lie because it denies the light of GOD, preferring to see as the world sees, a god of vengeance and judgement.

Look around you, at the time of writing, taxes are high on income and housing. And the writer feels like it is uncertain whether they will ever feel at home anywhere on this Earth. Even so, when it seems like you I am standing on quicksand, I remember that I have not personally had to work for years. The LORD has taken care of me.

But if a city falls due to its wickedness, it is not because "Look, that city was Babylon, the prophecy is fulfilled!" It is because GOD punished that city for its corruption. And if something wonderful happens, like the death of a tyrant, we are not to cheer for joy. A proverb says, "Do not gloat when your enemy falls, and do not let your heart rejoice when he stumbles, or the LORD will see and disapprove, and turn his wrath away from him."

Daniel, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Zechariah all have ideas on how the LORD comes (so does Revelation, but its predictions starkly contrast with them). But JESUS told us of the coming of the Day of the LORD, "No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the

[1065] I'm using the "It would have been sufficient" phrase to call back to a Passover saying, to remind the reader that such salvation is shown even in ancient times.

Father." We do not know GOD's plan for the future, so we ought to keep our hearts free of fear and false hope,[1066] trusting instead in the LORD.

CHAPTER 12

I was watching a Youtube video, where they made the case that history stopped in the year 1999. The idea was something along the lines of how there is a sort of break line, where clothing and fashion stalled out, and they showed how clothes since 1999 have no real difference, using episodes of *The Office* as an example. It is impossible to place the show chronologically, because nothing remarkable has happened in the last 25 years. The video also pointed out how many films are basically recycled, and how music has gotten so bland and uninspired that I've decided to call it *regressive* rock. Though it isn't just rock, country music lacks the feel to that it used to have, only being about twang accent not about true country values. And I suppose other musical genres too, I just haven't listened to everything. It then talked about the Mandela Effect, and how it's increasingly omnipresent, with Berenstein becoming Beren*stain* (this is extremely unlikely as a name, as Berenstein as a name is wholly German, meaning "bear" "stone", and stein is a common German name ending), Fruit Loops becoming Froot Loops, and so on. The theory was that around 1999, a comet hit Earth, and we as a species are either in a dying dream or that reality was displaced so we continue to exist in a parallel world. I too am significantly surprised that it has been nearly 30 years since the 1990s. Given that since 1999, we have started to have more and more brand names with jarring and egregiously bad spellings, one would assume this is a subpar world that is run by Satan instead of GOD. This idea is not alone, something similar happened in the War of Souls trilogy of *Dragonlance* series. In this, the gods of the world find themselves unable to discover the world, except for the goddess of evil, who turns the time displaced world into a sort of funnel where the dead don't have an afterlife and she draws power from them.

But there's a problem with this. First, the most significant instance of this that people remember is saving the life of Nelson Mandela. Although some of these changes could have been done by Satan, or by wicked men with psychic powers or some invention, other changes don't track with the most significant change, which is to save the life of a man sentenced to death by oppressive forces. Second, I do not think that Satan has the power to bring humanity into a world where GOD or JESUS do not exist, for that would make Satan more powerful than GOD. Satan is an accusing angel, he only has the power to distort our perception. Third, as I explain in the section below, I do believe that I have had a personal encounter with JESUS.

Look around you, this world is sturdier than we think. Awhile back, those humans who are in charge of things like militaries and governments explored Antarctica (actually the outer rim of our flat Earth). They discovered that indeed we do have a firmament, made of "sky ice" or effectively frozen air. They attempted to drill through this only to find out that the cold outside Earth caused this to self-repair. Failing this, they sent nukes up in the sky to attack the firmament, but we still have a sky. Likewise, a Russian superdeep drilling effort kept meeting with broken drills, and what is probably not said is that the heat self-repaired the metal and rock. This Earth is a living thing and repairs itself. At the North Pole was once a great Tree of Life in the island of Atlantis that was called Yggdrasil by the Norse. But after much effort, this was cut down by the powers that be that seek to control this world. Yet all all around, its roots form our mountains, and trees grow all through the Earth. This is GOD's eternal kingdom. As Daniel said, it will never be overthrown. Not even a freaking comet slamming into it can destroy it. It may be filled with jarring imperfections that offend my sense of order. Human civilizations may rise and fall, or even forget about it. But it is GOD's kingdom, now and always.

KYRIA

CHAPTER 1

Ages have passed since the last writing. We now live in a world that is after the resurrection of JESUS,

[1066] Jeremiah once said, "The prophets of old who preceded you and me prophesied war, disaster, and plague against many lands and great kingdoms. As for the prophet who prophesies peace, only if the word of the prophet comes true will the prophet be recognized as one the LORD has truly sent." At the same time, he had to contend with prophets who preached false peace. Neither hope nor fear is true prophecy, for as Lao Tzu said, "Hope is as hollow as fear."

an event that the Romans and Jews tried to suppress, that the Muslims called a lie with their belief that Christ has someone else die for him. That atheists have declared never happened, despite historical sources at least recounting his death. But it is not enough that JESUS lived. JESUS is raised from the dead.

And I can prove it. How? Here is my testimony.

CHAPTER 2

In 1982 AD, I was born. I was a healthy male named Thomas. My parents named me after the founder of Connecticut, and my father gave me a patronymic middle name. In other words, I was loaded from birth with three expectations I rather didn't want.

I was expected to measure up to my father, who became a successful priest, married and raised a family. I failed in this, never measuring up in either love or family, or in occupation. I suppose I found my calling in writing, but I dunno. I was expected to be like Thomas Hooker, at least informally. He was a great man, a great founder, and a pious man. Which I do share his drive to religion, I have always been too quiet to found much of anything I suppose.

And I was told again and again to be a man. But I hated it. You see...

CHAPTER 3

When I was six years old, my brother dressed me in a dress for a historical skit about David Karesh. I don't understand all that well what that had to do with David Karesh, actually, but since then, I have been fascinated with women's clothing, and when I got older, I realized that I wasn't gay, and I did like women. But there was something weird about the way I approached women. I felt a tremendous pressure from other people to ask the person I liked out. But secretly, I wanted to be the woman, I wanted to the one asked. Though even more awkwardly, as I wasn't gay, that meant I wanted to be asked by another woman. And they weren't asking me for one reason or another. And I wanted to be able to become pregnant, to experience the joy of bringing a life into the world, even though this was at odds with the previous thing. In short, I really didn't know what I wanted.

I saw men as a reminder of the constant urges to be more manly, and I was grossed out by the average hairy male. I liked long legs, soft breasts, narrow waist, and wide hips. And I wanted those things myself. I felt stuck.

CHAPTER 4

After college, I took two road trips. For the first, I had been depressed for awhile, and I didn't even know why myself. It had been so long since I did self-examination, that I didn't even know that my transgender issues were the root of my depression. I knew that I had trouble holding jobs, and there was a sense of disconnect with my romantic life, as though the women I met basically all blended together into one person. Anyway, the first time, things came to a head when my parents were moving away from the area, and things weren't really going anywhere with a girl from my town. I spent about nine months away from home. My folks helped me out, and I went to stay with my sister in Arizona. But I didn't find any work there, so I had to drive on. I used WWOOF, a gardening program that dealt in organic farming, and paid for travel stipends.

The first place I went to was a place in Valley Center, California. It was called Morning Star Ranch, and it was part of the Twelve Tribes sect (cult). I had a really bad feeling about the place, which got worse as time went by. First, they had an elder tell one of the people camping in our yurt that they didn't like his artwork, so he burned it in front of us. Then someone decided to be baptized, cried out, and jumped in the water. Then a person I'd confided with about my misgivings suddenly joined the cult, and I felt a sense of the walls closing in on me. The service was before breakfast, and they talked about how the breakfast was going to be late. I had arrived on the eve of Passover, and they were talking about "Removing the leaven from your life," and how "Whoever does not hate father and mother is not worthy." This very heavy works gospel was making me feel worse than I had before I left. And I realized that this "breakfast" probably wouldn't come until they made sure everyone joined up in the cult, that the guy I had befriend probably was already part of the cult, and trying to convince me to join, and that the doors were locked. I worried that I was trapped here.

Then as if in answer to my prayers, a small child opened the door. I rushed the door after him, packed my stuff, and took a look at a picture of my sister. I kept in mind that I loved my family, not some false ideal of Christianity that forced people into unhappiness, and giving up all to the group. One of the

guys told me of how they left, and got so depressed that they came back years later. I kept packing. Then the elder came, and told me that while I loved and cared about my family, they were going to "second death (an idea from Revelation)." I glared at him, and asked if I could leave. I drove north all that day until I got to a campground nearly 300 miles away.

The next day, there was a Presbyterian Church, and I was sure to attend. I needed a detox after these people, and the sermon didn't disappoint. They spoke of the ancient Jewish systems of Jewish sacrifice. And then they paused.

"We don't have to do that anymore," they said. I spent the rest of the time taking a number of gardening jobs. Some of them were in Washington, New Mexico, all the way up to Illinois. I headed back home before the move, rejoining my family. I managed not to run out of money.

CHAPTER 5

The second road trip was after I met Kira. I had been working for an extended period for a priest doing his yardwork and chores, I had been volunteering at the library, and I had been helping out at a theater. One week, I met a lady at church, and managed to get a job working for her. The deal was that she would be going away for a few weeks, and I was to mow her lawn, and keep everything in good shape. But her house was at the side of a hill leading into the water, and they had me driving a riding mower. Needless to say, I wasn't at all confident, and they decided I probably couldn't manage the job. For some reason, my parents had me write an apology letter, and I expressed an intent to attend her daughter's birthday (she had mentioned her while we had been working). Anyway, I went to her party, and it was weird. Despite not being able to call her properly (there was something odd about her phone), she called me back using a different number. But that number didn't work either. So after the party, we kept in touch by text message. At first, it was once every two weeks. Then once a week. Then after I had been left at home, and I moved a hammock and it whacked me hard in the face, and I was bleeding pretty hard so I tried to get in touch with my folks but they were gone, so I got in touch with her. After that, I called her about once a day, and by the time that we went on vacation in New Jersey, I was texting her several times a day.

Then things got weird. Her location, her availability, and the fact that she seemed somewhat shaking about her own job didn't add up. So, like the weird sort of person I am, I immediately decided it was logical that she was a spy.

I got radio silence for about half a day, and then she said that she didn't care, and that I could believe what I wanted. She kept in touch with me as though nothing had ever happened, but I started keeping track of her text messages over the next year or so, trying to figure out what she wanted and who she really was.

But first, I freaked out and ran. Especially after she had said something about, "You might see things different after you get back home." And indeed I did. I got the sense that my current boss was somewhat controlling, and I got the sense that my life in that town was in a rut. Immediately after work, I grabbed what I could and drove off. My intention was to commit suicide, probably driving off the Grand Canyon. This was during the Obama shutdown, around October 2011, I think.

During the trip, I got stuck in a lot of road construction, and even though I tried to get away, it was like everything was conspiring to keep me from my destination. I eventually realized that the Grand Canyon would probably be closed off to visitors with the shutdown. So I drove north, hoping to freeze to death or something. I woke up at a rest stop in the middle of a blizzard, and noticed the front windshield said the words, "Call Me." This was interesting enough that I wanted to keep living. So I drove through the storm, almost crashing into a telephone pole right in the intersection. But I didn't hit the pole, despite the ice giving me zero traction. And I didn't flip my car over or dent it in any way. I was unscathed, despite every reason not to be. But the police and the fire trucks came to pick me up, and I they almost wanted to have me arrested for stealing the car, until I got them to call my parents. As it was, I got fined for failing to stop at the traffic intersection.

I headed back, trying to make it as far south and east as I could, but I stopped at a rest stop during a tornado warning. But not tornado came for my car. The next morning, though, the car's battery was dead. A guy named Noah helped rescue me, by jumpstarting my car. And so, I made it back in one piece.

CHAPTER 6

My family was wary of inviting me back home. So instead I moved to the city of Richmond for awhile. My family helped me get an apartment for cheap. And I found a job working at Amazon.
And then I began to notice weird things.
It started with me visiting Kira for a coffee date. But somehow, all the roads around the coffee shop were detoured.
I wound up driving around in circles for about half and hour, and then trying to walk there on foot. She changed plans, and instead we went to a Chinese restaurant. While we were there, she was looking around like she was searching for someone. We went home, and the next day, somehow it was like I had new eyes. I began to notice Kira among the people who worked at Amazon. And among those who I met in shops and at bars. It wasn't that I was lovesick, and saw her face everywhere or anything. Rather, I saw people who had similar eyes, or the same sort of mannerisms, or the same catchphrase. Kira had a saying, "No worries." Over the past few years in the city, and ever since then, I noticed a lot of people saying that. Some of these were male, some female, but I kept track of the people who said this, and they all had a familiar look to their face. It wasn't just a coincidence, because they were similar in other ways too.
I met a girl named Jasmine, who had talked about how she used to be in prostitution. This apparently was a common story, because a few others told me similar (not identical, but close enough) stories of exploitation. Over about two years, I began to built a personality profile for a certain girl who I had never exactly seen her true face.
I was still operating under the assumption that I was looking for a spy, but not only the space involved but the number of people that would need to support this was getting implausible. That is, it started to become clear from incidents like an entire group of streets being blocked off (such as the coffee shop incident), or somehow avoid wrecks without a scratch, that Occam's Razor was actually more in favor of a supernatural explanation. Moreover, I had originally assumed that this girl was a disguise expert, but there didn't appear to be any seams or flaws in Kira's form. And I had rushed through traffic trying to get to areas before her. While I could have written it off as just meet a bunch of similar people, it wasn't just that they had similar quirks. They related to me the same way. It was like I was talking to Kira, even though she was supposedly in another town nearly three hours away.

CHAPTER 7

Around this time, I was working at Amazon, I was writing down the contents of text messages to sort out patterns, and I was visiting friends and family. I was busy, and I was exhausted. I joined clubs (no, not like nightclubs but like gaming clubs or anime clubs), and tried to meet people and let off steam. But I was tense as anything, so I went back to church, and as my nerves were tight, I eventually took therapy.
I began to notice other coincidences. Like, I'd be watching an anime with friends, and it was *Attack on Titan* where they found out the titans were hollow, and I'd have a sermon about how our problems seem big, but in fact there's nothing inside them. Or my sister had me pick up rotisserie chicken, and I spent awhile finding it (I'm a bit hopeless), and the next day one of the items at Amazon was a movie called *Wild Goose Chase*. I also noticed that some commercials I heard lately had a strangely relevant message.
And yet, if Kira was a spy, she didn't seem to have any designs for me. In fact, one day, I tried to head over to sign up for that sort of thing. I headed out that day, but a family member asked me to pick up some chocolate bread before I headed out of town. I went down a hill, and a car smashed into me. Again, I was completely unhurt, but the car was leaking transmission and wouldn't start. Almost as though this sort of thing wasn't a good fit for me.
Around this time, I got another few sermons. One was about how you either can seek after the truth or seek after madness. The other was about how the law was set up so that we would find it impossible to keep, because it was supposed to lead us to JESUS.
I realized that all of this writing down text messages to try to sort out who Kira was effectively was a waste of time, because I already knew. The account of the resurrection tells us that the disciples didn't know JESUS when they he visited with him, meaning after his death, his form was able to change. I let this sink in, and realized that it was far easier to imagine a shapechanging personification of humanity than it was to imagine a squadron of agents all working to prop up a

particular sequence of events. Moreover, the other idea was making me paranoid. So I gave it up. When I did, I came to realize there was a sort of flow to how this girl (and sometimes she was a guy) thought and acted, and how she related to me. I was able to get to know her, and I got to like her, love her even. But yes, there was a sense of oddity not being able to date a specific girl.

CHAPTER 8

After this, I looked into things more. I noticed something funny (again). Kira's name was Elizabeth Kira Lemons. But I quickly realized that was a pseudonym. No, not the spy thing before.

Instead, while I was taking therapy, and realized that I was transgender, and looked into my past, my mom said something about how if I had been born female. Mom said, "We were thinking of naming you Elizabeth." That is, she was not only JESUS, but I was part of the Body of Christ. I was modeled after Kira. Or rather, *Kyria*. *Kyria* is the feminine form of *Kyrie* ("LORD"), meaning "LADY," and most of these names did have similar letters to that. Whether this girl's name was Emily, Mitchell, Jasmine, Noah, Kara, Kira, Kyle, Caitlin, Renee, or Sapphire, whatever. I don't think the name matters, as long as this isn't misused. This was the same girl, even if it was a boy. And more importantly, this girl was part of who I was. I later watched *30 Rock*, where there was a Liz Lemon. As a side note, the name Kira also came up, both as the muse in the film *Xanadu*, and as the student who killed random people with a book in *Death Note*. Regarding the latter, Kira was seen as more like a deity or abstract concept than a person.

But more and more, I realized the significance of my original name. I was Thomas, the "Twin." Churches changed, jobs changed. I eventually moved away from the area, and back home to live with my parents. But I never forgot the effect that all of this had on my life. I am still depressed, but now I understand that JESUS is alive. But it took some time for this to fully sink in. You see, when COVID came, I got caught up in apocalyptic thinking. But during all this time, when our family was leaving to go to South Carolina or Florida, or anywhere to get relief from being cooped up by hysterical people, I saw that GOD traveled with me. I understood what it meant when GOD told the Jews that they didn't need a temple, because he had a tent. Eventually, I came to the realization that despite all of the doom and gloom talk going around, there wasn't anything to worry about. JESUS is risen, he is not in some far away Heaven but among us. And he travels with us. JESUS is our Temple.

CHAPTER 9

Years ago, I went out west, and I was staying with fundamentalist types. They taught their kids and the kids of the neighborhood the Bible by rote. And I remember thinking that the Bible should be interpreted rather than simply read and memorized.

One of the problems of thinking the Bible is something to be read literally without edits is that you do not develop the ability to accept other people with ideas different from you, or at the very least tolerate them. This is a particular problem when you say the Bible was the literal word of GOD. Ironically, this is exactly the sort of "god" that the Muslims believe in, one of rules and rigid standards. But it gets worse than that, because the Bible's canon was a process. Some works were dismissed as forgeries, and rightly so. Others, however, were rejected because the reigning theology didn't like the implications of what they said. Galatians tells us that anything against the Gospel is under a curse, while else they say to "test every spirit." Taken together, you have to interpret the Bible yourself, you cannot just decide to follow it blindly.

Could people be wrong about what GOD wants? I suppose. But think about it this way, the Samaritans only have the first five books of Torah. The Jews have the Tanakh. The Catholics have a Bible that has Apocrypha, the Protestants have a Bible that doesn't (they decided some of these books were crap). The Ethiopians have several books not shared by later Christians. What, you think having the right book could make you saved or damned? JESUS is what saves us, not having a correct canon. Among the things that was scrubbed was some of Peter's teachings of eventual salvation. I guess the idea they wanted to avoid was the idea that people who rejected JESUS could be saved. What for? Because they didn't follow your teachings, they're not part of your club? What nonsense. Does GOD not love all of his children? Have not all of us sinned and fallen short of glory of GOD? Can anyone claim they are righteous, simply by knowing JESUS? If meeting Kira taught me anything, it is that knowing JESUS is about companionship. And JESUS wants that companionship with us, which is why he teaches us about himself. But life is such that some have fall into bad times to know that they need

GOD. Yes, I have seen ups and downs, and the road to GOD is not always straight. Indeed, GOD will meet us where we are, whether our Bible is like Jefferson's or the Slave Bible or the Book of Mormon. Sometimes it takes longer or shorter, that's all.

CHAPTER 10

I was watching a show one day called *The Orville*. Now, the creator of the series, Seth McFarlane, is an atheist with some pretty outspoken ideas on religion; basically, like a typical woke liberal, he seems to think religion is some kind of backwards idea that civilized people outgrow. Uhhhhh yeah, about that. The 20th century was marked by a rise in atheism, and do you know what happened? Two bloody and senseless World Wars, a Holocaust, millions dying under communism, and authoritarian regimes trying to ban religion or else. Statistically, Islam has fought twice as many conflicts as the rest of all religion put together, but this amounts to only 6% total wars. The rest are entirely for secular reasons. If we became less religious, there would be more deaths, not less. The reason for this is pretty simple: atheists believe that killing people you don't like solves the problem, whereas religious people believe in an afterlife, and that bad karma might result in a bad afterlife, to say nothing of a possible bad reincarnation. To say nothing of the senselessness of trying to kill someone who will just be reborn later or something.

Anyway, I digress. The point was, there was one episode called "Mad Idolatry" where because of an accident of interfering with a developing planet (which was in an metaphasic orbit, and would shift in and out of the universe and a parallel one, making eleven days of time equal to seven centuries in their time), a small child was exposed to the healing technology of future civilization. As a result, they deified her, and started flaying people on account of the word of Kelly. She tried to tell people that she was a regular human like them, but things got alot worse before they got better. While I wholly disagreed with their ideas about religion, it got me thinking about the idea that maybe we ought not to take the Bible as the literal word of GOD. GOD indeed cares for us, but I do not think zealous dogmatic thinking is spiritually mature.

Rather, we ought to think of JESUS as a human first, that his ideals were meant for humanity. While JESUS is GOD, we ought to worship him with a sense that everything written about him could have at least some faulty assumptions. At the top of the list is the idea that GOD necessarily wants to punish our enemies. If GOD wanted to speak to humanity, I don't think it was about favoring one people over all others, and I really don't think it was to die for our sins, only to come back later to condemn all of us to a burning lake of fire. These are the products of a psychopathic mind hopped up on several substances of dubious benefit, not the "word of GOD." The real LORD of our life is just as Hosea said, "In that day you will call me, 'My husband,' and no longer call me, 'LORD.'"[1067] The LORD is our constant companion when times get hard. Therefore, we are not alone. GOD is on our side. Neither should we worry about nonsense about editing the Bible (such as mentioned in Revelation). The Word of GOD is JESUS. Thus, the Bible should likewise be a living document. Likewise, our relationship should develop. JESUS is no longer merely LORD, but also our LADY. Our Beloved, our DEAREST.[1068]

THEOPHANY

CHAPTER 1

Ages have passed since the last writing. This is because of the stern warning attributed to John, "I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this scroll: If anyone adds anything to them, GOD will add to that person the plagues described in this scroll. And if anyone takes words away from this scroll of prophecy, GOD will take away from that person any share in the Tree of Life and in the Holy City, which are described in this scroll." Yet this 'John' cannot be proved to be prophesying in truth. His writing doesn't match earlier writings attributed to John, with some sources saying the language of Revelation is "barbaric" in comparison. Nor does this JESUS seem to be in line with what we know of JESUS.

Galatians says, "But even if we or an angel from Heaven should preach a gospel other than the one we preached to you, let them be under GOD's curse!" And it warns again, "As we have said before, so now

[1067] LORD or Master.

[1068] This is a call back to Hosea and its reference to GOD as no longer LORD.

I say again: If anyone is preaching to you a gospel contrary to the one you received, let him be under a curse!"
The Gospel is this: that JESUS was fully human but the Son of GOD, that he was a peacemaker and a friend of sinners, that JESUS died for our sins on the cross, and that JESUS was raised to life again. It is a message of grace and forgiveness, not denying reality that the world is harsh (as Buddha has done with some of his meditations), but by accepting that even if the world is filled with catastrophe, GOD is with us. Yet John, if that is his name, preaches a different gospel. This John is under a curse, and I will not listen to him. Nearly two thousand years have passed, and much has changed. The temple fell, as JESUS predicted. But it was just a building, made by human hands. And we shouldn't put our faith in buildings, or objects, or people, for this is idolatry. JESUS was the Savior, he was the Messiah, and he is the Son of GOD.

CHAPTER 2

In Zechariah, there were two ideas of the Messiah. The first mentioned was a leader who defended Israel, and the second suffered and died on the cross. These are connected by the common thread of the Day of the LORD.
How then can we reconcile this? I just said that the book of Revelation has no validity because it preaches against the Gospel. So why then am I saying that these are both the Messiah? Well, it has to do with having a personal understanding of who GOD and JESUS really are.

CHAPTER 3

CS Lewis once said that JESUS is a lunatic, a liar, or the LORD. Allow me to do something similar. We hear the narrative of Revelation, where we have several Beasts and the Antichrist, and then this version of "GOD/JESUS" punishes all of them horribly for being unfaithful, and for being deceived. GOD cannot be a psychopath who sets people up to be deceived and then tells them, "Oops, sorry! You were tricked!" If we regard the story from Genesis onward as a sadist playing games, then GOD manipulated Adam and Eve into making a world of miserable suffering similar to a man who rips wings off of butterflies for fun. Humans cannot worship such a GOD, but more than that, it is contradictory to the nature of a creator. I recall reading a Chick Tract known as "Is Allah Like You?" where an angry Muslim man who beats his wife and son. And he received mail that asks him to research the very passages of the Quran that he reveres. He considers it a challenge, so he goes ahead with it. But he eventually becomes outraged, when he reads that Allah is pleased to deceive who he will and lead astray who he will, but they are also to be judged by their actions. Ultimately, he defects from Allah. The point being that if JESUS or GOD were like Allah, it would be necessary to stage a coup against him, or at the very least, stop believing in him.
Which leads of course into the position of the atheist (and by extension, the Satanist). The idea being that GOD's laws are tyranny, and that disobeying them is freedom. The problem of this is that it falls apart under experience. A person who disobeys rules is not free, rather he is licentious, and all too often an addict. He is *enslaved* by his sin. Earlier, I talked about Lady Wisdom and Lady Folly. Attempting to be free by disobeying GOD ultimately leads one to financial ruin, addiction, or perversions. And like in the story, their addicitons cause their death. And so they would, if all of us were held accountable to the degree of our sins as they are. But often we have chances to repent. The LORD is neither too lenient or merciless. This reflects that GOD indeed cares about law and justice, but this is the same GOD who says "I desire mercy not sacrifice." Grace is the law that transcends even justice. So, back to the two predictions of the Messiah. The LORD's defense of Israel is not condemnation of the world, they are its salvation. We have misfortune and fortune at the hands of the LORD; the former for our growth, and the latter because he cares for us. The Chick Tract asked "Is Allah Like You?" and this is the point, any GOD worth our worship offers humanity as a model in his own image.

CHAPTER 4

Tolkien once had a discussion with CS Lewis on the nature of fantasy. He claimed that the Bible is the Greatest Story Ever Told, not because it is a fantasy but because it is the only true story ever, that all stories beside it have inklings of what this story offers. Think back to the previous writings. Each of these meetings with GOD was a *theophany*, that is to say, where "GOD speaks" to us normal mortals. When JESUS died, secular people say that his followers made up this story. They said the followers

took the body. And Jews and Romans continue this story today. But this is not limited to the Jewish and pagans.

Revelation claims that Christ is coming again in glory to punish the wicked. Yet this account doesn't seem to know JESUS, who forgave even the people who died with him on the cross for grievous crimes, who forgave even those whipped, mocked, and crucified him. Revelation claims JESUS will come again to punish the wicked, regardless of what JESUS in the Gospel did. Revelation condemns sorcery for instance. Yet JESUS allowed other people to do healing in his name, he did not call them sorcerers. And JESUS himself is called a sorcerer named Yeshu[1069] by the Jews in certain versions of the Talmud (when they mention him at all). Or it condemns adultery, yet JESUS forgave an adulterous woman, defending her from being stoned. Or sinners in general, all of them worthy of a swim in a lake of fire. Yet JESUS healed sinners, and came to save sinners. The Second Coming then is a denial of grace, a denial of forgiveness of sins, a denial of the reality that the resurrection of JESUS already happened, and a denial of the Gospel.

Revelation is a Jewish attempt to distort JESUS, and 'John' who wrote Revelation is not the Christian apostle who wrote, "For whatsoever is born of GOD overcomes the world: and this is the victory that overcomes the world, even our faith." Nor is he the Christian apostle, who quoted JESUS as saying, "For GOD did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him." He is a Jew who wrote for his own purposes. He is a false prophet that JESUS warned against. What then are we to make of this writing? Why was it written? Well, I'll tell you.

CHAPTER 5

The fall of the temple was around 70 AD, roughly forty years from the crucifixion of JESUS. There is little ink wasted telling of the violent action of Rome against Israel in Jewish scripture, except among historians like Josephus. Their religious writings are closed, as are their histories. They have tried to forget this event. In fact, neither do any Christians tell of this event in the Bible. It is only by reading history that you might find out about this, so hidden is it from sight. But memories have a way of creeping to the surface. Revelation and other apocalyptic passages snuck into the Bible through the feelings of those who lost their temple and their loved ones. The Jews still haven't gotten over it. They still wail at the Western Wall. And they still long for a Messiah.

The Christians as well long for a return of their Messiah. But JESUS has never left us. And even the secular world is preoccupied with apocalypse. From talk of climate change, to fear of weather, war, or diseases, the secular world creates end times hysteria wherever we look.

In the years that have passed, Christians largely undermined the Roman world, and it fall under its own weight. Large cities have built, science, medicine, and new systems of government have been made. Modern conveniences let us do many things automatically. Yet our dependence on electricity makes us vulnerable. The secular state has never forgiven Christianity, which is why the government increasingly is at odds with religion, Jewish or Christian. They tell us that GOD is dead, and they tell us that science has disproved the need for religion. Yet they cannot tell us how nothing created everything, how creation can happen in a vacuum. This is because it can't. The world all around us is proof of GOD, so is the spiritual world. We can be sure of GOD's promise. We know that there is the resurrection, and that it has come with JESUS. But this world we live in still very much sucks.

CHAPTER 6

Is JESUS false, then? Not a bit. The Jews tried to distort him as a freedom fighter. The Romans tried to persecute his followers, and failing that, they eventually clogged the church with false doctrines, with hierarchy, and with child molestation scandals. What? It seems like all the time, another priest is accused, another church shut down. I can say it.

But this presents a logic problem. If Jews made him up, then why is this Yeshu character viewed as a sorcerer and a threat to Jews? Why do they invent reasons to disqualify JESUS as the Messiah? JESUS wouldn't be Barabbas. He wasn't the freedom fighter Messiah they wanted. So they reject him. And if the Romans made him up, why would the fight their own creation? Why would the try so hard to make Christians into atheists? Why would their churches instead push worship of Mary? Why keep them too busy with work to spend time in prayer and meditation? Why persecute and undermine the

[1069] ***Y**imach **Sh**emo **V**'Zichro*, meaning "may his name and memory be obliterated."

church with statism?
That the memory of JESUS is damned is proof that Christ not only existed, but rose from the dead. For if JESUS did not exist, there would be no point in spending ink against him. And like the Jews and Romans in Matthew, there seems to be a deal struck trying any trick to deny that he was raised. Yet the biggest trick is to say, "Yes he was risen, but now he is in Heaven. He is distant from your struggles. Keep waiting, and you will get justice when he comes again. For then JESUS will come again to judge all the sinners." No, surely not. For we are *all* sinners. Christ has died, he is risen, he has come again and is within us. We are part of the Body of Christ. We have no need to wait, for "Whenever two our three are gathered together," JESUS is among us.
Ask yourself this. The Gospel tells us that Christ did not come to condemn the world but to save it. If JESUS did not come to condemn the world, why then would he come *again* to condemn the world? Thus, this John of Patmos is not the same John who is supposed to have written one of the Gospels (I think Lazarus was the real writer even of those) nor the one who is supposed to have written three letters, but a man cursed for writing against the Gospel.
Rather, JESUS has come again already. It would be a contradiction to the Gospel to say JESUS isn't coming, but consider Advent. If we are to believe Christ isn't coming, we aren't prepared. But if we think Christ is coming be in the future, we are reminded of the many failed prediction dates of the Jehovah's Witnesses (1874, 1914, 1925, 1975). And many a news articles asks "Are we living in End Times?" We should indeed have an attitude of preparation, and not be like the people who ate and drank during the time of Noah. But it should not be out of a false understanding of a coming LORD in a vague future date, but a certainty that our LORD is here on this Earth, and is able to visit us at any time.

CHAPTER 7

The current age certainly seems to be end times, but I say that we are reading events wrong. We are not to be afraid.
I will not say "Peace, peace," when there is no peace. There do seem to be hard times. But this is not because these prophecies are true. This is because people have believed the prophecies. And not just among the religious. The wicked secular want to make some of the prophecies of Revelation true, including a certain computer maker's patent to insert tracking chips on people to use cryptocurrency. This is a war that started between Babylon and the Jews, continued with Romans and Jews/Christians, and continues now with the religious communities and the secular state. It is the Tower of Babel again, with all who live forced to build things back "better". But to what end?
But we must understand something. JESUS said, "nothing outside a person can defile them by going into them. Rather it is what comes out of a person that defiles them." It is not a Mark of the Beast that can distance us from GOD. It is our pettiness, our desire to end the world for personal gain, our refusal to get along with our fellow man. It is our social distance from each other. No, GOD will not throw us into Hell. For as Romans says, "Indeed, nothing in all creation will ever be able to separate us from the love of GOD that is revealed in Christ JESUS our GOD." We humans cannot make a device powerful enough to keep us from GOD's love. Yet when we distance from each other, when we live in fear, we suffer far worse than if GOD had punished us thus.
The theophany of GOD is his appearance again and again, saying, "I AM here. There is no reason to be afraid. For I love you and want the best for you." Empires may rise and fall, but GOD suffers along with us. It is not good for Man to be alone. Thus, it is my wish, and my prayer to GOD that we will return to each other, and return to our faith in GOD. For Christ has risen and is here within us, the Body of Christ. Therefore, we need no Second Coming. If we return to each other, that is enough.
How then are we to be saved, if Christ will not come on the Last Days?[1070] Well, let me ask a question. What happened to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and all who lived before Christ came? Or what of people who died on a remote island? Are they damned, having lived and died without knowing Christ? And

[1070] To be clear, this is not to say that JESUS cannot come. But there are two things to clarify here. First, as far as the Gospel has come, JESUS has come again. He came again in the resurrection, and he even appeared to five hundred people. To talk then about Last Days is to miss the point that the Second Coming *already* happened. Second, JESUS can come to us at any time. But we ought to regard this as a guest to a party, and not something to be feared or hated, as Revelation teaches. We are to prepare as we do for a party guest. To sweep the house, but then welcome him as Mary, not fixate on the details, like Martha did.

what about children who die too young to confess JESUS is GOD? Wouldn't it make GOD cruel for damning them? Either grace exists or it does not. How then can the writers of Revelation and some of the letters declare those who do not accept JESUS are damned? After all, if you cannot be sure whether Christ has forgiven you, it is no different from ignorance of JESUS.

If you forgive others, then you must forgive even those who choose to reject Christ from ignorance or misinformation. For a person who believes JESUS already rejects them, in turn rejects JESUS. How can someone who has no hope believe that JESUS is on their side? So JESUS appears to save not only the righteous but the unrighteous.

And still others belong to different faiths. Are they doomed? Not at all, for Christ said, "I have other sheep that are not of this flock. I must bring them also. They too will listen to my voice, and there will be one flock and one shepherd." Therefore, Christ died to save us from our sins, and not for ours only but for the sins of the whole world. GOD desires a relationship with us. He cannot do this if he ends the relationship to instead punish us or destroy us. Why, then, is it so easy to believe in the Second Coming? It's because we sense distance between ourselves and GOD. But this distance is an illusion. We know good and evil, and so we believe in the great delusion that Christ left us. GOD speaks to us. Whether or not we are able to listen.

This is not to say all history has stopped. Every day, GOD is doing something new for us. In these very times, JESUS is speaking to the Muslims. It is a reported phenomenon that some Muslims encounter visions of Christ during Ramadan. And in Iran, about a million people have left mosques, and are looking into Christianity, because the system of government under Islam has left them poor, addicted to drugs, and facing the corruption of government, just as things were reported before the rise of Zoroaster's teachings. In Korea, under Confucianism, people are in massive debt, and working until they drop dead, fixating on reputation over quality of life. These people are crying out for a new path, and the secular world cannot give it to them.

We therefore ought never to assume the scriptures are closed, not like the Jews and not like most Christians. Every day is a new day. Thanks be to GOD for his love and mercy in our lives, and for our creation. And thanks be to JESUS for being among us. And thanks be to the Holy Spirit, the *Ruach ha Kodesh,* the Comforter. Now and forever.